



ESCAPE
BRINGING SEA TRAVEL TO THE NEXT LEVEL

GURAIIDHOO

Kaafu Atoll • South Male Atoll • Maldives

Diving Paradise • Surf Haven • Authentic Island Life

- 32 km from Male
- 20 Guesthouses
- World-Class Diving
- Best Surf Base

■ Unique: Lhosfushi Bridge Island • Manta Point on Doorstep • Sultan's Refuge

Complete Tourist Travel Guide • 2025 / 2026 Edition

KAAFU ATOLL • REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES • INDIAN OCEAN

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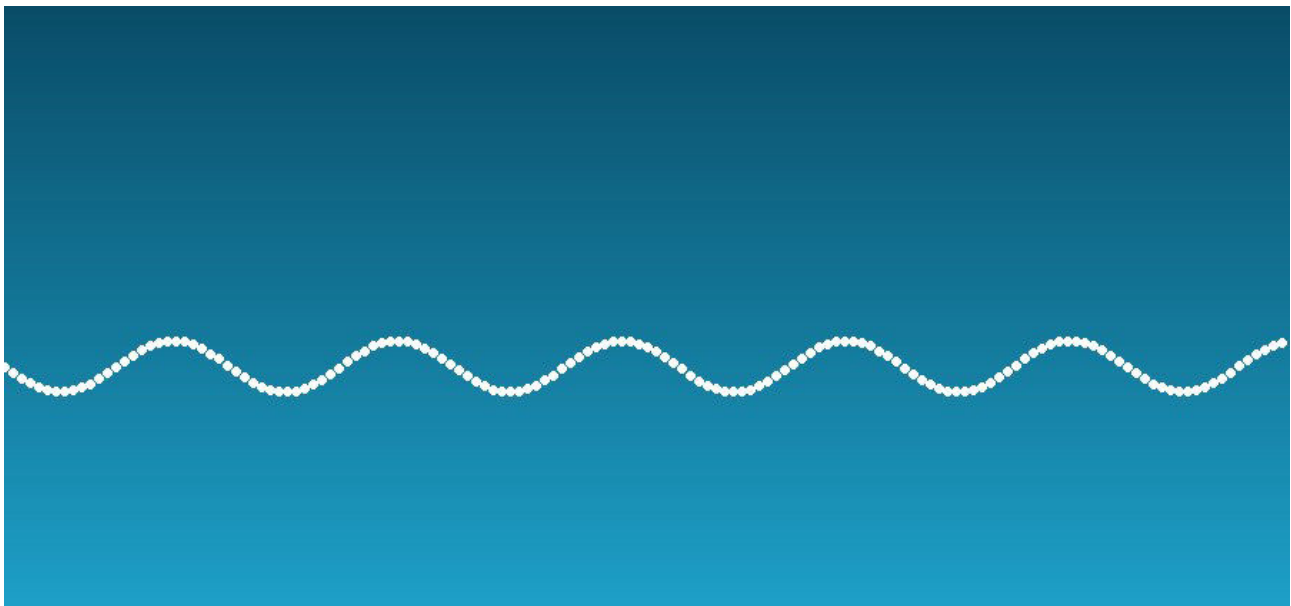
Your complete guide to Guraidhoo Island

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1. WELCOME TO GURAIIDHOO

The Diving Paradise & Surf Haven of South Male Atoll

Tucked on the eastern rim of South Male Atoll in Kaafu Atoll, approximately 32 kilometres south of the Maldivian capital Malé, Guraidhoo Island is a hidden gem that rewards travellers who venture slightly further than the more famous Maafushi. Smaller, quieter, and less commercialised, Guraidhoo offers something profoundly different — a place where the rhythms of traditional Maldivian life continue largely unchanged, and where the surrounding waters are home to some of the finest dive sites and surf breaks in the entire Indian Ocean.



Guraidhoo Island viewed from above — the eastern reef edge, turquoise lagoon, and the footbridge connecting to Lhosfushi tourist island are visible.

With a population of around 1,739 residents (2022 census), Guraidhoo is a living, working Maldivian fishing community. Its colourful houses, busy boatyard, central mosque, football pitch, and the friendly waves from local children cycling to school give it an authenticity that no resort island can replicate. Historically fascinating — the island once served as a refuge for Maldivian sultans during political turmoil — Guraidhoo sits adjacent to the Guraidhoo Kandu Marine Protected Area, a 352-hectare protected zone that ensures the reefs remain among the healthiest and most biodiverse in South Male Atoll.

What sets Guraidhoo apart is its remarkable combination: world-class diving at sites like Guraidhoo Corner and Kandooma Thila, access to the legendary Kandooma Right surf break, a unique tourist island (Lhosfushi) connected by a scenic footbridge, baby sharks swimming in the shallows, and a genuine small-town Maldivian atmosphere that makes you feel like a welcomed guest rather than just another tourist.

■ Pro Tip

Guraidhoo is the ideal destination for travellers who want the Maldives experience without the crowds. While neighbouring Maafushi can feel busy, Guraidhoo offers a slower, more intimate pace — perfect for divers, surfers, couples, and anyone seeking deeper cultural immersion alongside spectacular marine encounters.

2. ESSENTIAL FACTS & KEY STATISTICS

Everything you need to know at a glance

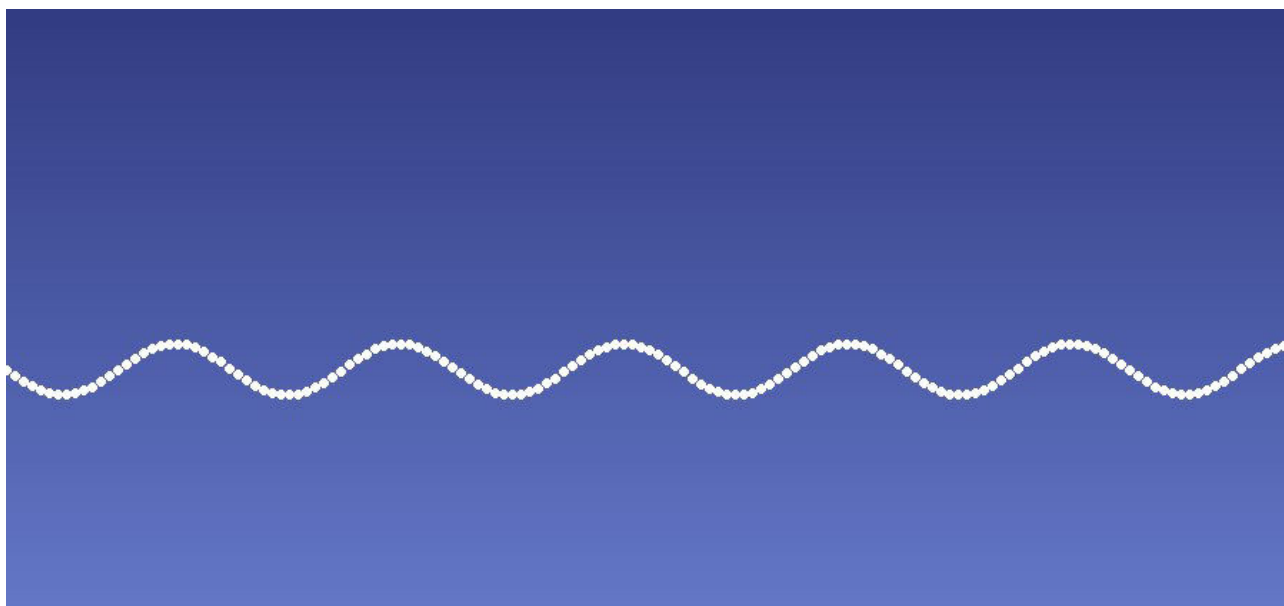
32 km	1,739	20	352 ha	28°C	30 m
From Male Capital	Population (2022)	Guesthouses	Marine Protected Area	Water Temperature	Peak Visibility

FACT	DETAIL
Location	Kaafu Atoll (South Male Atoll), eastern rim — Maldives
Coordinates	3°54'03"N 73°28'04"E
Distance from Male	~32 km south (30.1 km by direct line)
Island Size	~20.8 hectares land area; approx. 700 m x 500 m
Population	1,739 residents (2022); 1,550 Maldivians + 189 foreigners
Language	Dhivehi (official); English spoken at tourist guesthouses
Religion	Sunni Islam; Friday is the holy day
Currency	Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR); USD widely accepted
Time Zone	UTC+5 (Maldives Standard Time)
Ferry to Male	~2 hrs 15 min, MVR 35 (~\$2.50); departs Villingili Terminal
Speedboat to Male	~35–40 min, ~\$30–40 per person
ATM	No ATM on island — bring cash from Male
Unique Feature	Lhosfushi tourist island connected by scenic footbridge
Marine Reserve	Guraidhoo Kandu MPA (352 ha) — protected since 1995
Surf Season	Peak: May–October (southwest monsoon)
Best Dive Season	December–April (northeast monsoon, 30 m visibility)
Nearby Resort	Holiday Inn Kandooma — 100 m from island shore

3. GETTING THERE

How to reach Guraidhoo from Male and the airport

Guraidhoo is accessible from Velana International Airport and Malé via two main options. There is no direct airport jetty service for ferries — you first transfer to Malé by airport ferry (MVR 15, every 10–15 min), then onward to Guraidhoo. Speedboats can depart directly from the airport jetty area.



The Villingili Ferry Terminal in Male — departure point for public ferries to Guraidhoo and other South Male Atoll islands.

Transport	Duration	Cost	Departure	Notes
Public Ferry (Guraidhoo Ferry)	~2 hrs 15 min	MVR 35 (~\$2.50)	Villingili Terminal, Male	Sun–Thu only. Departs Male ~3:00 PM. Departs Guraidhoo ~10:00 AM.
Public Ferry (Province Ferry)	~2 hrs	MVR 35 (~\$2.50)	Villingili Terminal, Male	Check schedule; passes Gulhi & Maafushi. Scenic route.
Private Speedboat	~35–40 min	\$30–40/person	Airport jetty or Male harbour	Most convenient; book in advance. Many guesthouses offer private transfers.
Shared Speedboat	~40 min	\$15–25/person	Male harbour	Pre-booking required; departs when enough passengers are present.

Pro Tip

IMPORTANT: There is NO ATM on Guraidhoo. Stock up on Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR) or USD cash in Male before you travel. Most guesthouses accept USD but local shops and cafes prefer MVR. Also note: if departing on a Friday or before 11 AM, leave Guraidhoo the day before your flight to ensure you reach the airport in time.

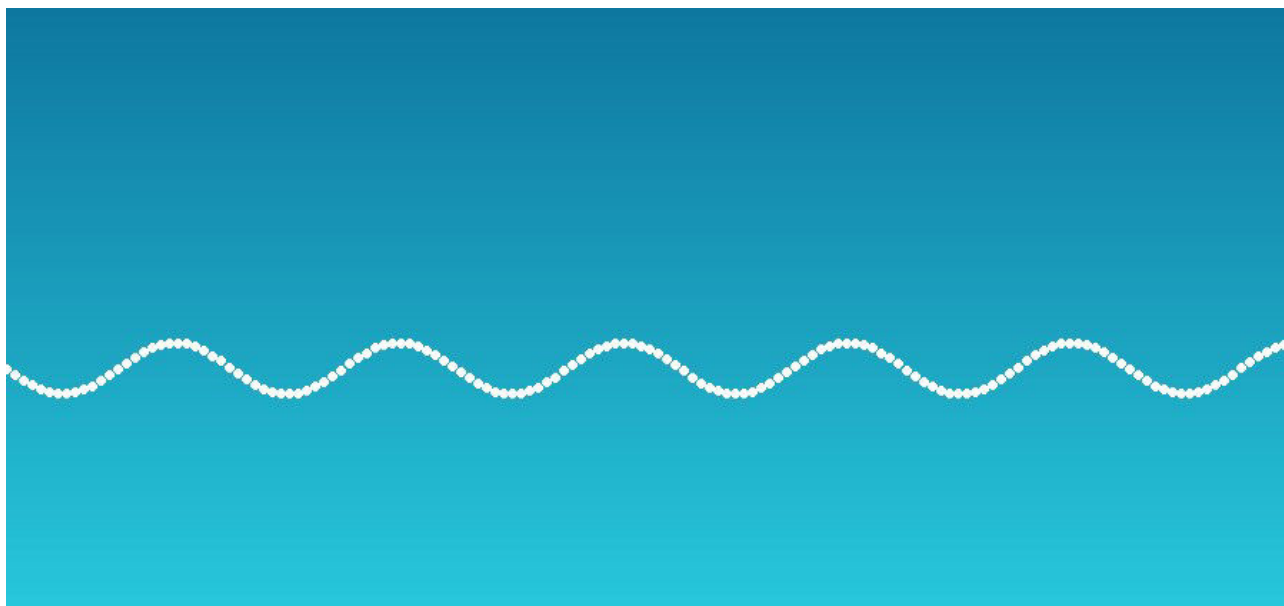
4. BEACHES & LHOSFUSHI ISLAND

Sandy shores, turquoise lagoons, and the unique bridge island

Lhosfushi — The Bridge Island

One of Guraidhoo's most distinctive and charming features is Lhosfushi — a deserted uninhabited island connected directly to Guraidhoo by a picturesque wooden footbridge. This tiny island is designated specifically for tourists and serves as the main bikini beach area where visitors can wear swimwear and sunbathe freely. The walk across the bridge at sunset, with the warm Indian Ocean on both sides, is one of the most memorable experiences on the island.

Lhosfushi's southern shore faces the open ocean and is frequented by surfers drawn to the consistent swell. The northern lagoon side offers calmer, shallow waters suitable for swimming and relaxed snorkelling. Note that the swimming at the main tourist beach is somewhat shallow with areas of dead coral, so the house reef snorkel (accessed from shore on Guraidhoo itself) offers a far richer underwater experience.



The iconic footbridge connecting Guraidhoo to the uninhabited Lhosfushi tourist island — walk across at golden hour for a magical experience.

Guraidhoo Bikini Beach

Guraidhoo itself also has a charming 'semi-informal' bikini beach area overlooking the Holiday Inn Resort Kandooma — just 100 metres offshore. This quieter, more intimate beach offers stunning views of the luxury resort and the outer reef. The warm, clear water is perfect for a peaceful morning swim, and it is often possible to spot baby blacktip reef sharks swimming in the shallow waters right near the shore — a completely unique and thrilling experience that delights both adults and children.

Public Beach & Pier

The harbour pier area is a hub of authentic island life. In the evenings, locals gather here as sharks and rays come to scavenge at a feeding cage placed in the water. Watching these magnificent creatures up close from the pier — completely free of charge — is one of Guraidhoo's most extraordinary spectacles. The island's sandy lanes and colourful painted houses make a beautiful backdrop for sunset photography.

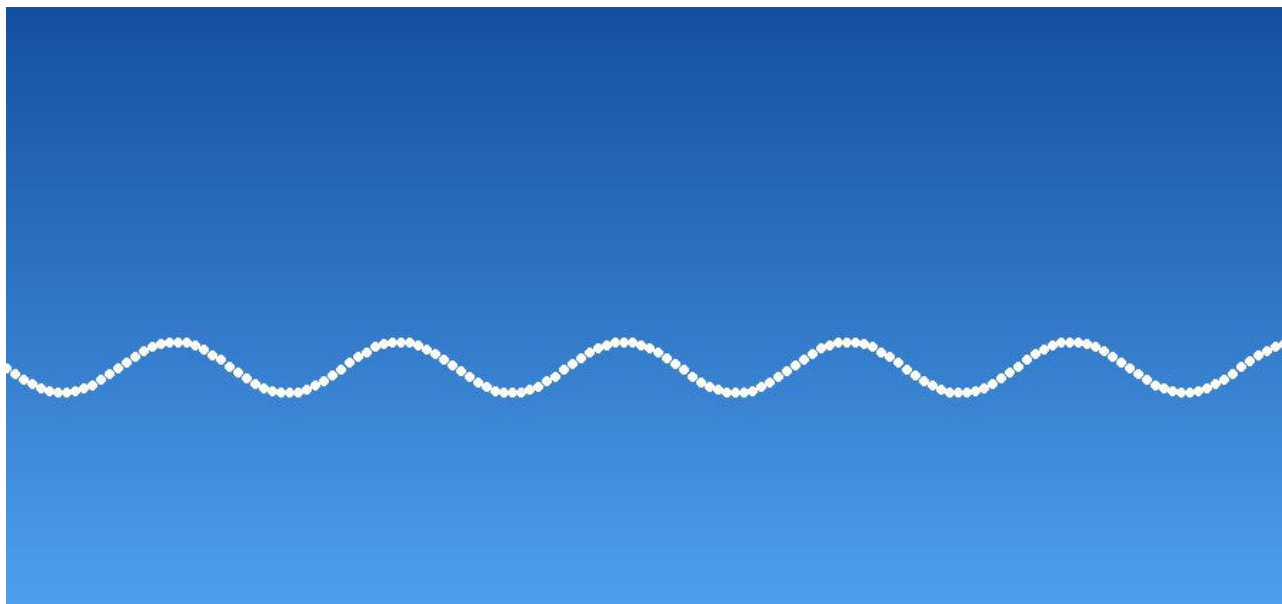
■ Pro Tip

Don't miss the evening shark and ray feeding at the harbour pier! Locals place food waste in a cage in the water and blacktip reef sharks, nurse sharks, and stingrays gather at dusk to feed. You can watch from just metres away — completely free and absolutely thrilling.

5. SURFING

Guraidhoo — one of the Maldives' premier surf bases

Guraidhoo has established itself as one of the best surf bases in the Maldives, offering direct access to world-class waves during the southwest monsoon (May–October). The island's position at the southern edge of South Male Atoll, combined with the powerful ocean swells that funnel through the Guraidhoo Kandu channel, creates some of the most exhilarating surfing conditions in the entire Indian Ocean.



The powerful swells of Kandooma Right — one of the most sought-after surf breaks in the Maldives, accessible directly from Guraidhoo.

■ Kandooma Right

Level: Intermediate–Advanced | **Best Season:** Apr–Oct (peak Jun–Sep)

Located directly in front of Holiday Inn Resort Kandooma, just a short boat ride from Guraidhoo, Kandooma Right is a fun, hollow right-hand wave that attracts surfers from around the world. Fast, powerful, and perfectly shaped, it offers rides of up to 150 metres on the best swells. Waves regularly reach 4–6 feet, with larger sets of 8+ feet on prime days. One of the most consistent and crowd-free quality surf breaks in the Maldives.

■ Tiger Stripes

Level: Advanced | **Best Season:** Apr–Oct

A powerful, fast-breaking wave located a short boat ride from the island. Tiger Stripes is known for its raw power and speed, regularly reaching 8 feet or more on the biggest days. Suitable for experienced surfers looking for a genuine challenge in a pristine, uncrowded environment. Not for the faint-hearted.

■ Jailbreaks (Himmafushi)

Level: Intermediate–Advanced | **Best Season:** Apr–Oct

Located on the nearby island of Himmafushi (accessible by boat), Jailbreaks is one of the most famous surf spots in North Male Atoll. A long, peeling right-hander that offers extended rides and a forgiving take-off zone compared to the more powerful breaks around Guraidhoo. Popular with intermediate surfers looking to progress.

■ Riptides / Channels

Level: Intermediate | **Best Season:** Apr–Oct

The channels around Guraidhoo Kandu offer several consistent wave formations suitable for intermediate surfers. These breaks are less crowded and more sheltered, making them ideal for surfers building confidence before attempting the more powerful reef breaks.

■ Lhosfushi South Shore

Level: Beginner–Intermediate | **Best Season:** May–Sep

The southern shore of the connected Lhosfushi Island catches regular swell during the monsoon season and provides a more accessible option for beginner and intermediate surfers. Softer, more forgiving waves with easy paddle-out conditions.

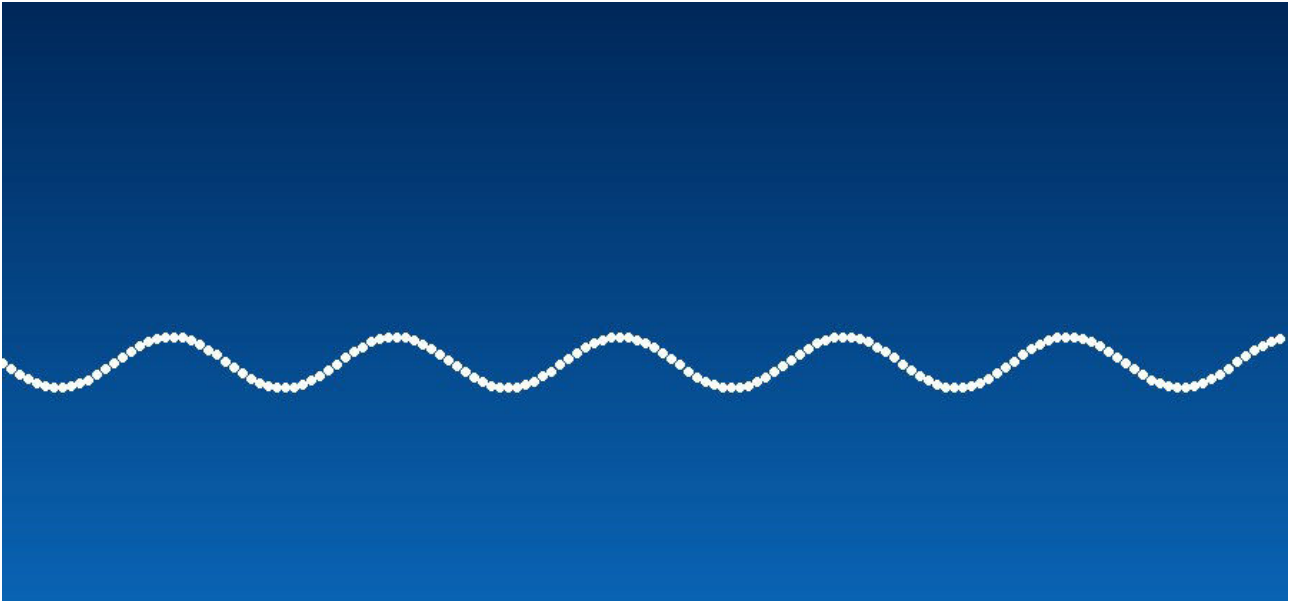
■ Pro Tip

Guraidhoo's guesthouses, particularly Medhufaru Inn, offer surf packages including boat transfers to the breaks, surfboard rental, and knowledgeable local guides. Booking a surf-specific guesthouse package gives you the best access to all breaks. Always check reef conditions with local guides before paddling out.

6. SCUBA DIVING

World-class dive sites of South Male Atoll

Guraidhoo is internationally recognised as one of the finest diving destinations in the Maldives. With two PADI-certified dive centres on the island and a location at the gateway to some of the most current-rich, pelagic-filled waters in the Indian Ocean, Guraidhoo offers diving experiences that range from accessible house reef dives for beginners to heart-pounding drift dives through channels teeming with grey reef sharks, eagle rays, manta rays, and even hammerhead sharks.



Divers exploring the dramatic walls and overhangs of Guraidhoo Corner — grey reef sharks, eagle rays and Napoleon wrasse are regular encounters.

Premier Dive Sites Near Guraidhoo

● **Guraidhoo Corner | Depth: 10–35 m | Level: Intermediate–Advanced | Season: All year**

The signature dive site of South Male Atoll and one of the most celebrated in all of the Maldives. This complex system of channels, reef plateaus, walls and drop-offs can be explored as three distinct sites — Guraidhoo Corner, Lhosfushi Kandhu, and Medhu Faru. Strong incoming currents deliver a constant parade of grey reef sharks, Napoleon wrasse, eagle rays, and enormous schools of fusiliers. The corner's overhangs are draped in soft corals, sea fans, and gorgonians. An unmissable dive — often considered among the top five in the entire Maldives.

● **Kandooma Thila | Depth: 12–40 m | Level: Intermediate–Advanced | Season: All year**

A perfectly shaped submerged pinnacle north of Kandooma Island — widely considered one of the best thilas in all of North and South Male Atoll. The top reef begins at 12 m, dropping to a sandy base at 35–40 m. During incoming currents, grey reef sharks and whitetip sharks patrol the western 'Jack Corner' alongside barracuda, giant trevally, and groupers. During outgoing currents, sharks gather at a cleaning station on the northeast pinnacle at 30 m. Overhangs draped in vibrant soft corals.

● **Cocoa Corner / Cocoa Thila | Depth: 15–30 m | Level: Advanced | Season: All year**

South Male's most revered dive site, located on the outer atoll edge near Cocoa Island. A large deep-water pinnacle whose ravines and overhangs shelter grey reef sharks, eagle rays, and massive schools of fusiliers in the powerful current. Sweetlips, snappers, and groupers are abundant. Strong currents make this suitable for experienced divers only — but those who make it are rewarded with underwater spectacles of astonishing scale and variety.

● **Guraidhoo Kandhu South | Depth: 10–35 m | Level: Intermediate–Advanced | Season: Dec–Apr best**

A large underwater region at the southern end of the Guraidhoo channel complex, featuring diverse topography: walls covered in gorgonians and whip corals, sandy channel floors with blue-spotted rays and ribbon eels, large outcrops blanketed in multi-coloured soft corals, and sweeping drift diving past oriental sweetlips, bannerfish, and butterflyfish. Two to three dives can be planned just in this area alone.

● **Kandooma Caves | Depth: 10–25 m | Level: All levels | Season: All year**

These enormous caverns are among the largest and finest in all of South Male Atoll. Two large cave systems close to each other, one at 20 m and another at 16 m (70 m long with a curly overhang), plus a smaller cave at 10 m with a chimney rising to the top reef at 5 m. Inside: yellow sponges, seafans, blue soft coral, tube corals, giant moray eels, squirrelfish, and groupers. Green turtles are frequently spotted here.

● **Medhufaru (Medhu Faru) | Depth: 8–30 m | Level: All levels | Season: All year**

Located between Guraidhoo Corner and Lhosfushi Kandhu, Medhufaru offers a picturesque reef teeming with diverse fish life. At 30 m, overhangs are covered in sea fans. Between 8–20 m, rich coral formations host a wonderful variety of marine life. During northeast currents, sharks, eagle rays, and Napoleon wrasse are commonly encountered drifting along the channel wall. A brilliant site for photographers.

● **House Reef Shore Dive | Depth: 3–20 m | Level: All levels | Season: All year**

Directly accessible from shore, Guraidhoo's house reef offers a convenient and rewarding dive for all levels. Colourful reef fish, sea turtles, moray eels, occasional blacktip reef sharks, and healthy hard coral formations. Many guesthouses provide guides for beginner snorkellers and divers here. No boat required — perfect for a morning or twilight dive without logistics.

● **Vadhoo Caves | Depth: 15–30 m | Level: Intermediate–Advanced | Season: All year**

On the northern side of South Male Atoll, Vadhoo Caves offers a series of spectacular caverns where divers can shelter from powerful currents while gazing out into the blue for reef sharks, eagle rays, and tuna passing in the current. Fusiliers, sweetlips, red snappers, and trevally are abundant, with moray eels and lionfish hidden in crevices.

■ **Pro Tip**

Guraidhoo has two PADI dive centres offering everything from beginner Discover Scuba dives to Divemaster certification. Medhufaru Inn's dive centre is located directly at the harbour — just a 2-minute walk to the boats. In 10 minutes you can be at some of the most spectacular channel dives in the Maldives. Manta point is directly in front of the dive centre. Nitrox available on request.

7. SNORKELLING

Discover the reefs from the surface — no certification needed

Guraidhoo's surrounding reefs and lagoon offer superb snorkelling opportunities for all levels. The house reef is accessible directly from shore and teems with colourful reef fish, sea turtles, and the occasional blacktip reef shark visible in the shallows. Guided snorkel excursions by boat take you to pristine coral gardens and famous snorkelling sites across South Male Atoll.

House Reef (Shore Access) [Free / equipment rental]

Walk in from Guraidhoo's beach and swim to the reef edge. Best underwater visibility in the morning. Turtles are regularly seen here, and with luck you may spot a blacktip reef shark or eagle ray gliding through the clear water.

Guraidhoo Corner Snorkel [\$25–40/pp (guided boat trip)]

Guided snorkel trips to the shallower sections of Guraidhoo Corner allow snorkellers to observe grey reef sharks, eagle rays, and enormous schools of fusiliers and snappers from the surface. One of the most dramatic snorkelling experiences in the Maldives.

Turtle Snorkelling [\$25–35/pp (guided)]

Dedicated turtle snorkel tours to known feeding and resting sites where green and hawksbill turtles are regularly encountered at close range. One of Guraidhoo's most popular excursions for families and non-divers.

Sandbank Snorkel Excursion [\$45–60/pp]

Boat trip to a pristine nearby sandbank combined with snorkelling at a coral garden or nurse shark site. A perfect half-day excursion combining beach relaxation with underwater exploration.

Night Snorkelling [\$30–45/pp]

Guided night snorkel excursions with torches reveal the reef's nocturnal inhabitants — sleeping parrotfish, hunting moray eels, octopus, and the dazzling light show of bioluminescent plankton on new moon nights.

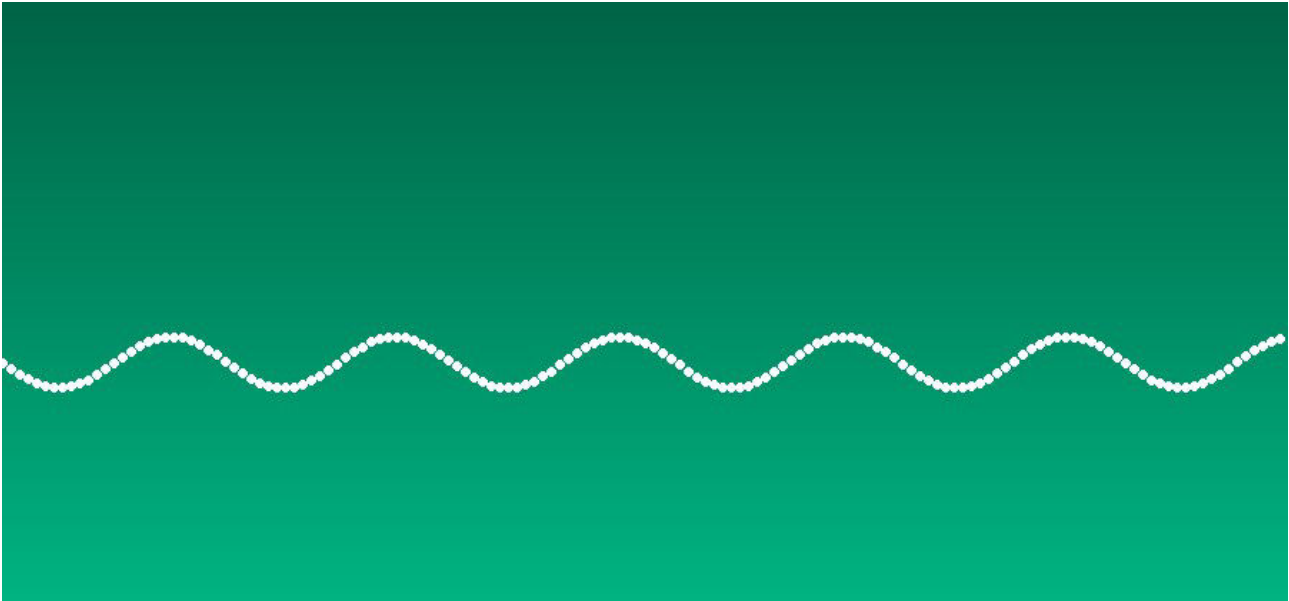
■ Pro Tip

Snorkelling gear is not always free — if you plan extensive snorkelling, bring your own mask and fins for the best experience. Some guesthouses provide beginner guides for the house reef at no extra charge. Note: reef-safe mineral sunscreen only please!

8. MARINE LIFE

The extraordinary underwater world of Guraidhoo Kandu MPA

The Guraidhoo Kandu Marine Protected Area — designated in 1995 as one of the Maldives' earliest protected marine zones — ensures that the surrounding waters remain among the most biodiverse and healthy in all of South Male Atoll. Strong currents funnel nutrient-rich ocean water through the channels, supporting extraordinary concentrations of large pelagic species rarely seen at more sheltered sites.



Vibrant coral formations of South Male Atoll — the backbone of Guraidhoo's world-class marine biodiversity.

■ Sharks (Multiple Species)

- Grey Reef Shark — the dominant species at channel dive sites; schools of 10–30 at peak current
- Whitetip Reef Shark — cleaning stations at Kandooma Thila; nocturnal reef patrollers
- Blacktip Reef Shark — frequently seen in shallow water near Guraidhoo beach and pier
- Nurse Shark — docile bottom-dwellers in sandy areas; visible from Lhosfushi shore
- Hammerhead Shark — seasonal (May–Nov) sightings at deeper channel dive sites
- Whale Shark — seasonal (Nov–Apr and Aug); sightings near South Male outer reefs

■ Sea Turtles

- Green Sea Turtle — abundant at cave sites and coral gardens; often seen at Kandooma Caves
- Hawksbill Turtle — regularly spotted at house reef and Guraidhoo Corner shallows

■ Rays

- Manta Ray — Guraidhoo's manta cleaning station is directly in front of the harbour dive centre!

- Eagle Ray — graceful gliders at channel sites and house reef; often in small groups
- Blue-Spotted Stingray — common on sandy channel floors at Guraidhoo Kandu South
- Ribbon Eel — resident in sandy areas; vivid blue males and yellow females

■ Dolphins

- Spinner Dolphin — pods regularly sighted on dolphin watching cruises at sunset
- Bottlenose Dolphin — occasional sightings at channel dive sites and on boat transfers

■ Iconic Fish Species

- Napoleon Wrasse — large, friendly fish at Napoleon Reef and Kandooma Thila; approachable
- Giant Trevally & Barracuda — hunting in packs at Jack Corner; impressive sight
- Schools of Fusiliers — tens of thousands at Guraidhoo Corner and Cocoa Thila
- Grey & Red Snappers, Groupers, Sweetlips — resident at all cave and channel sites
- Moray Eels (Honeycomb & Giant) — hiding in every overhang and cave system
- Lionfish, Scorpionfish, Leaf Scorpionfish — camouflaged and photogenic
- Clownfish in Anemones — shallow reef areas; classic Maldivian reef photo
- Parrotfish, Triggerfish, Angelfish, Butterflyfish — abundant on all reefs



Green sea turtle resting on reef — commonly sighted at Guraidhoo's dive and snorkel sites



Spinner dolphins — join a sunset cruise from Guraidhoo for near-guaranteed encounters

9. EXCURSIONS & ISLAND HOPPING

Explore the wonders of South Male Atoll from Guraidhoo

◆ Dolphin Watching Sunset Cruise

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

Board a traditional dhow as the sun sinks over South Male Atoll. Spinner dolphins regularly race alongside the bow, leaping and spinning in the golden evening light. The sunset views from the water — with resort and local islands silhouetted on the horizon — are spectacular. One of Guraidhoo's most popular and reliably rewarding excursions for all ages.

◆ Sandbank Picnic & Snorkel

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

Boat trip to a pristine natural sandbank rising from the Indian Ocean. Swim in the crystal-clear shallows, snorkel over coral gardens, and enjoy a true Maldivian isolation experience on a tiny strip of white sand surrounded by turquoise water. Picnic lunch often included. One of the most photogenic excursions available.

◆ Whale Shark Snorkel

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

Seasonal (best Nov–Apr) excursion to whale shark feeding areas in South Male Atoll. Swimming alongside the world's largest fish — completely harmless filter-feeders up to 12 m long — is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Guraidhoo operators offer one of the closest access points to the outer reefs where whale sharks aggregate.

◆ Maafushi Day Trip

Duration: Half day | **Price:** \$20–30/pp

Take the public ferry or a short speedboat hop to neighbouring Maafushi (8 km away) for the day. Enjoy Maafushi's more extensive water sports facilities, wider range of restaurants, and shopping, then return to Guraidhoo's peaceful atmosphere by evening. The perfect combination of the two islands' respective strengths.

◆ Traditional Night Fishing

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

Experience the centuries-old Maldivian pole-and-line fishing tradition under a starlit sky. Using traditional hand lines just as local fishermen have done for generations, this relaxing and atmospheric excursion often results in a satisfying catch — and sometimes extraordinary views of bioluminescent plankton glowing in the dark water around the boat.

◆ Bioluminescent Plankton Night Tour

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

On new moon nights between May and October, the waters around Guraidhoo come alive with electric-blue bioluminescent plankton. Your hands and feet glow with an otherworldly light as you swim through the darkness — one of nature's most magical and unforgettable phenomena. Not to be missed if timing allows.

◆ Nearby Resort Day Trip

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

Visit Holiday Inn Resort Kandooma — literally 100 m from Guraidhoo's shore — for a day pass experience. Access the resort's beach, pool, restaurants, and watersports facilities. A fascinating contrast between local island life and luxury resort life, available in the same afternoon.

◆ Gulhi Island Visit

Duration: Half day | **Price:** \$25–35/pp

Explore the charming and even less-touristed island of Gulhi, a short boat hop from Guraidhoo. Gulhi is a traditional fishing island with a warm community atmosphere, beautiful beaches, and excellent snorkelling. A perfect companion island to Guraidhoo for travellers seeking deeper local immersion.

10. LOCAL CULTURE, HISTORY & TRADITIONS

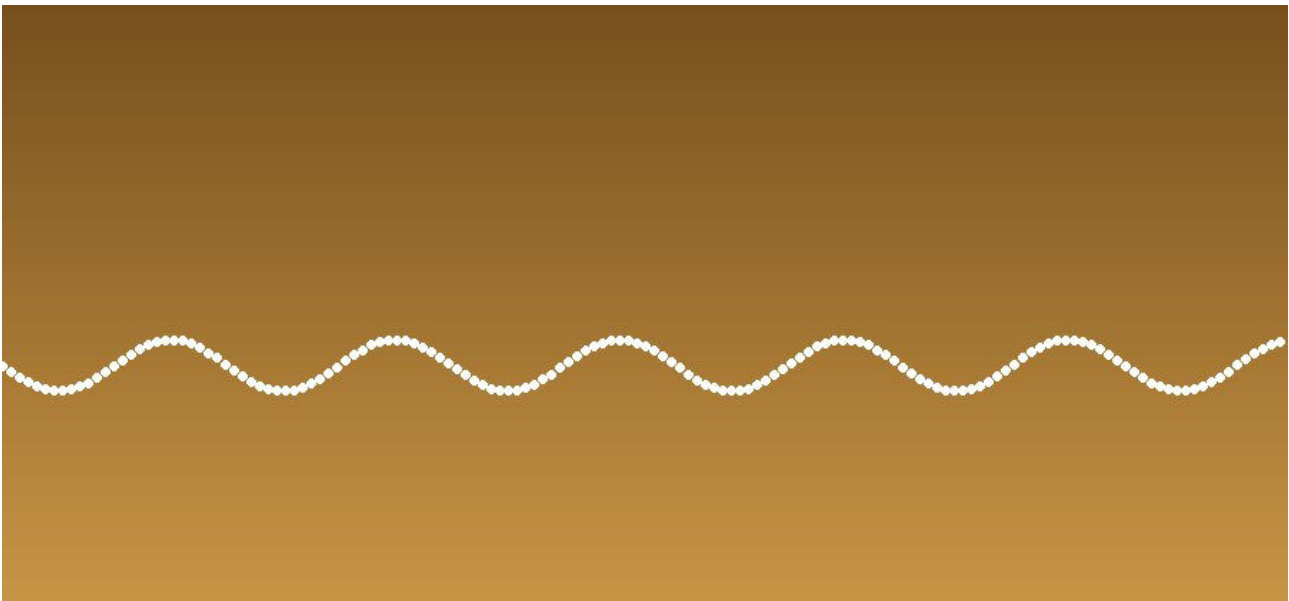
Discover the authentic soul of Guraidhoo

A Sultan's Refuge — Historical Significance

Guraidhoo carries a fascinating historical legacy as a refuge for Maldivian sultans during periods of political turmoil and attempted invasions. The island's location behind complex reef systems that made approach by foreign ships exceptionally difficult made it a natural strategic stronghold. This proud history of resilience and independence is woven into the local identity — residents point to it with quiet pride.

The Boatyard — Living Maritime Heritage

One of Guraidhoo's most distinctive features is its active traditional boatyard along the shoreline, where craftsmen still build and repair traditional Maldivian dhoni fishing boats using age-old techniques. Watching these skilled artisans at work — hand-shaping timber, applying caulking, and painting the distinctive colourful hulls — is a living window into a maritime tradition that has sustained these islands for centuries. The boatyard is open to respectful visitors and the craftsmen are generally happy to explain their work.



Guraidhoo's colourful streets and traditional boatyard reflect the island's proud fishing and maritime heritage.

Community Life

Walking Guraidhoo's sandy lanes is a genuine pleasure — colourful painted houses, children cycling home from school, women weaving traditional crafts in doorways, fishermen cleaning their catch by the harbour. The island has a football pitch (like all Maldivian islands), a school, a health centre, a mosque, souvenir shops, and small cafes. Several souvenir shops line the main road offering handmade crafts, shell jewellery, lacquerwork, and woven textiles — buy directly

from local artisans to support the community.

Islamic Traditions & Bodu Beru

Like all Maldivian local islands, Guraidhoo's daily rhythm is structured around the Islamic call to prayer five times daily. Friday mornings are peaceful and slow — the holy day is observed and many businesses open only after midday. Visitors are warmly welcomed by the community and will find that a respectful attitude and a genuine interest in local life is reciprocated with exceptional warmth and hospitality. Bodu Beru (traditional Maldivian drumming and dance) performances are sometimes organised by guesthouses for guests on special evenings.

11. FOOD & DINING GUIDE

Fresh seafood, local flavours, and international comfort food

Dining in Guraidhoo is simple, honest, and satisfying. With a smaller tourist infrastructure than Maafushi, the island's food scene is more local and authentic — freshly caught reef fish feature heavily on daily menus, seafood is often grilled moments after being brought in by the morning's fishing boats, and traditional Maldivian dishes are prepared with the same care as home cooking. Most guesthouses include breakfast and offer dinner; standalone cafes provide lunch options.

Must-Try Local Dishes

Mas Huni: The iconic Maldivian breakfast of shredded smoked tuna with freshly grated coconut, chopped onion, chilli and lime, served with roshi flatbread. Fresh, fragrant, and utterly delicious — the perfect island morning fuel.

Grilled Reef Fish: Fresh-caught snapper, grouper, or parrotfish grilled over charcoal and served with rice, local condiments, and fresh salad. The fish is often caught the same morning and the quality is outstanding.

Garudhiya: The Maldivian national soup — a clear, fragrant broth of fresh tuna served with rice, lime, chilli, and onion. Simple and deeply satisfying; pure island soul food.

Masroshi: Savoury tuna-filled roshi flatbread pastries, sold at local cafes as a snack or light meal. Perfect fuel between surf sessions or dive trips.

BBQ Beach Night: Many guesthouses organise beachfront BBQ evenings, often with fresh grilled seafood, local side dishes, and sometimes Bodu Beru performances. A wonderful communal dining experience under the stars.

Fresh Coconut & Tropical Juices: Freshly cracked coconuts and juices made from local tropical fruits are available everywhere. Coconut water is particularly reviving after water sports in the tropical heat.

Best Places to Eat

- **Chambao Cafe & Retreat:** One of the best restaurants on the island; beautiful sea views, wide menu of Maldivian dishes and international options, warm service. Great for leisurely lunches and dinners by the water.
- **Guesthouse Restaurants:** Most of Guraidhoo's 20 guesthouses serve excellent in-house meals. Fresh seafood curries, grilled fish, pasta, and Maldivian staples are all well represented. Breakfast is usually included with accommodation.
- **Local Tea Houses (Short Eats):** For the most authentic and budget-friendly experience, find the local 'short eats' tea houses serving hedhikaa (Maldivian snacks) — masroshi, baigiya (fish-filled puff pastries), and kulhi boakibaa (fish cakes) with sweet tea.

● **Beachside BBQ Evenings:** Organise in advance with your guesthouse for an unforgettable sunset BBQ on Lhosfushi or the beach — fresh grilled seafood, local salads, and cold drinks.

■ **Pro Tip**

Like all Maldivian local islands, Guraidhoo does not sell alcohol in restaurants or guesthouses. The neighbouring Holiday Inn Resort Kandooma (100 m offshore) can be visited for a licensed bar experience during resort day trips.

12. WHERE TO STAY

Guesthouses and boutique stays for every budget

Guraidhoo currently has 20 guesthouses with more under construction, making it a well-served but pleasantly uncrowded destination. Accommodation ranges from budget guesthouses to boutique dive-and-surf-focused properties, many with private beach access, rooftop terraces, and excellent in-house dive/surf package deals.

Category	Price/night (USD)	What to Expect
Budget Guesthouses	\$40–70	Clean en-suite rooms, A/C, WiFi, breakfast. Ideal for solo travellers, backpackers, and budget-conscious couples.
Mid-Range Guesthouses	\$70–130	Comfortable rooms, sea views, in-house restaurants, dive/surf packages, and rooftop terraces.
Boutique Dive & Surf Lodges	\$180–250	Specialist properties with equipment storage, drying rooms, direct harbour access, and expert local guides.
Beachfront Properties	\$150–300	Private beach access, pool at some properties, premium rooms with ocean views, and exceptional service.

Notable Properties

- Medhufaru Inn Guesthouse Surf & Dive — Specialist surf and dive property directly at the harbour. Most popular with divers and surfers; PADI centre on-site. Excellent local knowledge.
- Beach Hotel Guraidhoo — Overlooks one of the most beautiful beach views on the island; state-of-the-art design; sun loungers and huts on bikini beach included.
- Ocean Way Guraidhoo — Boutique property known for peaceful atmosphere, clear water views, and warm personalised service. Popular with couples.
- Guraidhoo Guesthouse — Well-located budget option with excellent value; good starting point for exploring the island on foot.
- Local Family Guesthouses — Several family-run guesthouses offer the most authentic homestay-style experience, genuine home-cooked meals, and wonderful insight into island life.

■ Pro Tip

Dive and surf packages from specialist guesthouses represent the best value — combining accommodation, meals, equipment, boat transfers, and guided dives/surf sessions into one daily rate. Book at least 2 weeks ahead during peak dive/surf season.

13. PRACTICAL TRAVEL TIPS

Everything you need for a smooth and enjoyable visit

■ Money & Budget

- NO ATM on Guraidhoo — bring sufficient USD or MVR cash from Male before travelling.
- Currency: MVR preferred in local shops and cafes; USD accepted at guesthouses.
- Budget: \$60–100/day covers comfortable accommodation, meals, and one activity.
- Daily expense estimate: meals ~\$20–30, snorkelling \$25–40, diving from \$40/dive.
- Tipping: \$2–5 for guides and service staff is appreciated but not obligatory.

■ Connectivity

- WiFi: Free WiFi at all guesthouses and most cafes.
- Mobile: Dhiraagu and Ooredoo SIM cards available in Male; good 4G on island.
- Power: 230V/50Hz; UK-style 3-pin plugs. Bring a universal travel adapter.

■ Health & Safety

- Health Centre: Guraidhoo has a small health centre for basic medical care.
- Nearest hospital: Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Male (~40 min speedboat).
- Reef Safety: NEVER stand on coral. Maintain distance from all marine animals.
- Sun Protection: SPF50+ reef-safe mineral sunscreen is essential.
- Rip currents: Always swim with a local guide near channel areas.
- Mosquito repellent recommended, especially at dawn and dusk.
- Drinking water: Buy bottled water; tap water not safe to drink.

■ Visa & Entry

- Free 30-day visa on arrival for all nationalities at Velana International Airport.
- Valid passport required (min. 6 months remaining validity from date of entry).
- No vaccination requirements for standard travel.

■ Island-Specific Tips

- No ATM — the most important practical reminder for Guraidhoo visitors.
- Leave a day early if departing on Friday (no morning ferry service).
- Book guesthouse speedboat transfers well in advance during peak season.
- Walking the entire island takes about 20–25 minutes — no vehicles needed.

- The hermit crab beach on Lhosfushi is a delightful free attraction — spend an afternoon exploring.

14. BEST TIME TO VISIT

Optimise your trip for diving, surfing, or relaxation

Guraidhoo offers excellent experiences year-round, but the best conditions depend on what you are primarily visiting for. Divers and snorkellers prefer the northeast monsoon season (December–April) for maximum visibility and calmest seas, while surfers target the southwest monsoon (May–October) when the powerful swells light up the island's world-class breaks.

Month	Weather	Seas	Diving	Surfing	Notes
January	Sunny & dry	Calm	Excellent (30m)	Flat	Peak dive season; book ahead
February	Sunny & dry	Calm	Excellent	Flat	Best overall conditions; peak prices
March	Warm & sunny	Calm	Very Good	Building	Great marine life; still dry
April	Warm, humid	Mostly calm	Good	Improving	Shoulder season; good value
May	Transition	Swells building	Good	Good	Surf season starts; prices drop
June	Wet season	Swells	Fair	Excellent	Peak surf; fewer divers
July	Wet & warm	Swells	Fair	Excellent	Best surf month; Kandooma Right firing
August	Wet & warm	Variable	Fair	Excellent	Whale shark sightings; great surf
September	Wet, stormy	Rough periods	Fair	Good	Quietest month; budget travel
October	Improving	Calming	Good	Good	Shoulder month; value season
November	Dry starts	Calming	Very Good	Fair	Dive season returning; good value
December	Sunny & dry	Calm	Excellent	Flat	Peak dive; festive season

■ Pro Tip

FOR DIVERS: January–March offers the absolute best visibility (30 m+), calmest seas, and peak marine life encounters. Book 2–3 months ahead for these months. **FOR SURFERS:** June–August delivers the most powerful and consistent Kandooma Right. Shoulder months May and September/October offer good waves with fewer crowds and significantly lower accommodation prices.

15. RESPONSIBLE TOURISM & ETIQUETTE

Respect the community, protect the reef, leave only footprints

Guraidhoo is a living community and a Marine Protected Area. Being a responsible, respectful visitor ensures the island remains a wonderful place for local residents, future travellers, and the extraordinary marine ecosystem that makes it special. Please observe these guidelines carefully during your stay:

■ Dress & Behaviour

- Cover shoulders and knees at all times outside Lhosfushi tourist beach and bikini beach areas.
- Swimwear is ONLY acceptable on Lhosfushi island and designated bikini beach — not on Guraidhoo streets, shops, or public areas.
- Always carry a sarong or cover-up to put on before leaving the beach.
- Volume and behaviour: keep noise levels low, especially near the mosque during prayer times.

■ Islamic Customs

- Five daily prayers shape the island's rhythm — be respectful of prayer times.
- During Ramadan, do not eat, drink, or smoke in public during daylight hours.
- Friday mornings are the main weekly holy period — plan activities accordingly.
- Dress modestly and behave respectfully when visiting the harbour, boatyard, and village lanes.

■ Marine Protected Area Rules

- GURAI DHOO KANDU IS A MARINE PROTECTED AREA — strict rules apply underwater.
- NEVER touch, stand on, or collect coral — even dead-looking coral is a living organism.
- Do not chase, ride, harass, or feed any marine animals.
- Use only reef-safe mineral sunscreen (no oxybenzone or octinoxate — these bleach coral).
- Remove all rubbish from beaches and never drop waste at sea.
- Maintain at least 2 metres distance from turtles, sharks, and manta rays.

■ Photography

- Ask permission before photographing locals, especially women and children.
- Underwater photography: no flash near turtles or sharks; maintain respectful distance.
- The boatyard craftsmen are generally happy to be photographed — always ask first.

■ Supporting the Local Economy

- Choose locally-owned guesthouses and restaurants over any international operations.
- Buy souvenirs and crafts directly from local artisans and souvenir shops on the main street.
- Hire local dive guides, surf instructors, and boat captains — their livelihoods depend on it.
- Eat at local tea houses and short-eats cafes — support Maldivian families directly.

Guraidhoo welcomes you with open arms. Dive its legendary reefs, ride its world-class waves, walk across the bridge to Lhosfushi at sunset, and let the real Maldives leave its mark on your heart.

Happy travels — Guraidhoo awaits! ■■■■