

Republic of Maldives - Travel facts & figures

The Maldives Republic of Maldives - Travel facts & figures Location:

The Republic of Maldives is a group of islands in the Indian Ocean to the west of India and Sri Lanka on the Equator. The group of low lying islands consist of 1190 islands. Only about 200 of these islands are inhabited by a population of about 260,000.

National emblem:

Government type:

Presidential Republic

Highest point: 2.4 m

Population: 350.000 (July 2006 est.)

Capital: Malé, geographic coordinates 4 10 N, 73 30 E

Population: 104,400 (census 2006).

Local Time: GMT + 5 hours

Life expectancy: 68 years

GDP – per capita: \$4,600 (2006 est.)

Visa: Free 30 days Visa upon arrival for all visitors

Safety: Number of shark attacks since 1976, none

Currency: The Maldivian currency is the Rufiyaa and Laaree. The exchange rate for US Dollar is (Dec. 2008) MRf.12.80 for the dollar. One Rufiyaa is equivalent to 100 laarees. Rufiyaa bank notes come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 500. Coins are in the denominations of MRf.2.00, MRf.1.00, 50 laarees, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 laaree. The US Dollar is the most commonly used foreign currency. Payments in the resorts and hotels can be made in most hard currency in cash, travellers’ cheques or credit cards. Commonly used credit cards are American Express, Visa, Master Card, Diners Club, JCB and Euro Card.

Language: Dhivehi is the official language, but English is widely spoken.

Customs: Importing alcohol, pork or pornography into the Maldives is forbidden and all luggage is X-rayed on arrival. On the way out, note that exporting sand or seashells is also forbidden.

Climate: The Maldives are tropical, with plenty of sunshine and temperatures around 29 – 32 degrees Celsius throughout the year. However, rainfall increases considerably during the April-October southwest monsoon, particularly

from June to August.

Clothing: Dress is generally casual. T-shirts and cotton clothing are most suitable. In Malé, the capital island and other inhabited islands it is recommended that women wear modest clothing without baring too much.

Religion: Maldives is primarily a Muslim (Sunni Muslims) country, and hence Islam is the official religion of the country. The religious background of the country has its own history, which is worth noting.

Public Holidays in 2011

1 January	New Year Holiday
15 February	Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) Birthday
26 February	Mawlid al-Nabi - Prophet Muhammad's Birthday
18 March	The Day Maldives Embraced Islam
26 July	Independence Day
27 July	Independence Day
1 August	Beginning of Ramadan
30 August	Fit'r Eid Day
31 August	Fit'r Eid Day
1 September	Fit'r Eid Day
3 November	Victory Day
5 November	Al'h'shaa Eid Day
11 November	Republic Day
13 November	Republic Day
26 December	Islamic New Year

Electricity: The electrical system is based on 230/240 AC volts.

Alcohol: Maldivians are Muslims and alcohol is forbidden, except in tourist resorts. The bars in all hotels are very well stocked, with an excellent range of all well known international brands, except in some of the budget all inclusive resorts.

Credit cards: Most major island resorts, local and souvenir shops will accept American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa. Arrangements vary from island to island. There are ATMs at a few places on Capital Island Malé.

Business hours: From Sunday to Thursday 7.30 - 14.30 in the government sector and generally from 9.00 to 5.00 in the private sector, although most offices in the private sector open for a half day on Saturday. Weekends: Friday and Saturday.

Health: Health care facilities are improving. The Indhira Gandhi Memorial Hospital in Malé is the biggest hospital in the Maldives providing sophisticated medical care. ADK Hospital is the biggest private health care facility and follows high medical standards. Some resorts have in-house doctors. A decompression chamber is within easy reach of most resorts in case of a diving emergency.

Hotels: There are several hotels and guesthouses in the Maldives, although most visitors stay on resort islands.

Facilities for the physically challenged: Most resorts provide facilities and make special arrangements for physically challenged visitors.

Malé International Airport (MLE): formerly known as Hulhulé Airport, is the main international airport. It is located on Hulhule island in the North Male atoll, near the capital island Malé. w: <http://www.airports.com.mv> phone: + 960 3338800

Internet country code: .mv

Telephone dialing code: + 960