

FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC

RFP NUMBER: (IUL)MMPRC-PRO/1/2020/26

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR  
MMPRC

27<sup>th</sup> October 2020

## FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC

### 1. BID PROCESS SCHEDULE

The indicative schedule of the submitting Bid Proposal in accordance with this RFP is as set out herein below;

#	Event Description	Deadline (Date & Time)
1	FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2020 via E-Mail, before 1415 hours (MALDIVES LOCAL TIME)

**Note:** The above Bid Process Schedule is indicative and is subject to change at the sole discretion of Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC); and MMPRC shall not be responsible for any change in timelines in any manner whatsoever.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. This RFP is an invitation for interested eligible Parties to submit Bids for the purpose of “Hiring a Party to Translate Websites UI and Content” for MMPRC as per the scope of work set out in Appendix 2 of this RFP.
  - a) MMPRC is the national tourism office of Maldives responsible for carrying out promotional and marketing activities to become the most preferred island destination in the world under the slogan of ‘Maldives... *the sunny side of life*’; whilst adhering to its mission to promote quality and sustainable growth in the local tourism industry to deliver long term economic, social and cultural benefits to the country.
- 2.1 The winning party is required to translate MMPRC website UI and contents as per the scope of work set out in appendix 2 of this RFP.
- 2.2 MMPRC reserves the right to, without limitation, without incurring any obligation or liability vis-à-vis any Bidder and without expressing any cause or reason thereof, at any time before the Bid Due Date and at its sole discretion, to amend RFP and/or the Bid Process including but not limited to the dates or other terms and conditions relating thereto, and/or suspend or cancel the Bid Process, and/or reject all of the Bids.
- 2.3 MMPRC reserves the right to verify any or all statements made by a Bidder in response to the RFP to establish to its satisfaction about the Bidder’s capacity to perform.
- 2.4 A Bidder, including the respective members/ shareholders officers, employees, agents or its advisers shall not engage in collusive bidding, anti-competitive conduct or any other similar conduct, in any form or manner, with any other person or in relation to.
- 2.5 The Bidder shall not engage in corrupt or fraudulent practices in the preparation or lodgment of a Bid. The Bidder shall not have any commercial mutual benefits with other Bidder(s) submitting the Bids on the date of submission of the Bid.
- 2.6 This RFP does not bind MMPRC to a Bidder with respect to the subject matter of the RFP; and MMPRC shall not under any circumstances be responsible for any costs incurred by any Bidder, including the respective members/ shareholders officers, employees, agents and advisers of the Bidder in participating in the Bid Process.
- 2.7 The Bidder shall be responsible for all of the costs associated with the preparation of its Bid and its participation in the Bid Process. MMPRC will not be responsible or in any way liable for

## FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC

- any costs, expenses and charges incurred by any Bidder in connection with the preparation and submission of its Bid or the Bid Process in any manner whatsoever, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the Bid Process including cancellation of the Bid Process by MMPRC.
- 2.8 Unless specifically stated otherwise in this RFP, all queries and communications in respect to the RFP or the Bid Process shall be addressed by any Bidder to MMPRC, by e-mail or in writing and shall be delivered in person, or by courier or by certified or registered mail, postage prepaid, at the address as set out hereunder, or such other address as may be informed by MMPRC from time to time;
- 2.9 Interested parties must submit an expression of interest along with a written statement of qualification within the proposal. Upon evaluation of all submittals, MMPRC may select various respondents to provide an oral presentation for further evaluation of a respondent's ability to assist MMPRC towards achieving the expected results of this solicitation as outlined in this RFP. However, MMPRC may select contractors based on written proposals alone.
- Ms. Fathimath Raheel  
Director, Procurement  
Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation  
H. Zonaria, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Boduthakurufaanu Magu, Male'  
Republic of Maldives  
Telephone: +960 3323228  
Email: [raalu@visitmaldives.com](mailto:raalu@visitmaldives.com)  
[procurement@visitmaldives.com](mailto:procurement@visitmaldives.com)
- 2.10 This RFP and all the entities participating in the Bid Process shall be governed by the laws of Maldives, without having regard to its principles of conflict of laws. Only the courts at Maldives shall have exclusive jurisdiction to entertain, hold trial, and adjudicate upon any dispute in relation to the RFP, Bid Process or any other aspect in relation thereto.
- 2.11 If the fee quoted by the bidder exceeds allocated budget, MMPRC Evaluation Committee has the discretion to disqualify the proposal during evaluation.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 3.1. This RFP is open to all Interested Parties meeting the eligibility criteria stipulated below. Proposals are to be prepared taking into account the Eligibility criteria stipulated below and presented in a manner consistent with the checklist in Appendix 4.
- 3.1.1. The Bidder/Respondent should be a registered company or a partnership or a registered subsidiary of a parent company (Refer to 4.8.2 and 4.8.3);
- 3.1.2. The Bidder/Respondent should have knowledge, expertise and experience in professional translation.
- 3.1.3. The Bidder/Respondent should be able to translate to different languages.
- 3.1.4. Sound financial background (Refer to 4.8.5 and 7.4).

## FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC

### 4. SUBMISSION AND WITHDRAWAL

#### 4.1. Proposal Specifications

All communications, responses and documentations must be in English language and all costs quoted in US Dollar currency. All responses must be submitted electronically. An original hardcopy may need to be submitted via post upon request.

#### 4.2. Bidder Communication

Bidders may contact the designated contact person for additional information or clarifications if needed.

#### 4.3. Best Value Selection and Negotiation

MMPRC may select the response(s) which demonstrates the best overall value, including proposed alternatives that will achieve the goals of MMPRC. MMPRC and a selected bidder may negotiate a change in element of contract performance or cost identified in the original proposal or the selected bidder's response which results in lower costs or more cost effective or better value than was presented in the selected bidder's original value.

#### 4.4. Costs

Itemized Cost estimates must be specifically identified in the proposals. MMPRC will not be responsible for any costs or expenses by bidders responding to this call for proposal.

#### 4.5. Compliance

MMPRC does not accept any liability damages done due to inadequacy of the submitted proposal and will provide no compensations for their loss.

#### 4.6. Expected duration of the Contract

Where a Selected Bidder does not comply with the common terms of the Agreement upon signing the Agreement, MMPRC reserves the right to reject a Selected Bidder within the term of the Agreement.

#### 4.7. Anticipated expenditures, funding or compensation for contract duration

4.7.1. The cost for website translation to be proposed by the bidders shall include all fixed costs related to the execution of the proposed services.

4.7.2. Variable costs should explicitly be agreed upon between the Selected Bidder and MMPRC in advance. These variable costs should also be estimated and included in the proposal and in addition to this the Selected Bidder should be willing to bear the payments on behalf of MMPRC (with prior approval). The expenses for such services can be invoiced separately.

#### 4.8. Elements of proposal submission

An applicant must submit a written proposal. The proposal must include comprehensive narratives that address the entire proposal requirements. Interested bidders must include the following information as part of their proposal;

4.8.1. A full Agency profile, inclusive of the names and credentials of principals, ownership with the Agency's organizational structure, proposed account team: number of years in operation and services offered directly by agency personnel.

## FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC

- 4.8.2. Each Bidder/Respondent shall state with clarity the type of business entity their Company is (E.g. Sole Proprietorship or Partnership or Corporation or a Subsidiary of a Parent Company etc.), and submit the relevant Registration Certificate AND Tax Registration Certificate;
- 4.8.3. If Bidder/Respondent is part of a Corporation or has a Parent Company, but has been legally incorporated independent of the Corporation or the Parent Company, the Bidder/Respondent shall submit a copy of their own Certificate of Incorporation AND Tax Registration Certificate. If these certificates are in any other language, the Bidder/Respondent should submit an English translation along with the proposal;
- 4.8.4. Each Bidder/Respondent should submit proof of financial capability by submitting:
- Bank reference letter. This letter should be in bank letterhead with authorized signature or bank stamp. The Bidder/Respondent should have a minimum of 20 percent of the quoted price in their bank account and this should be also stated in the reference letter. Letter should be translated if it is not in ENGLISH with authorized signature or stamp of the bank.
- Or**
- Last 3 months' bank statement on the bank letterhead with the authorised signature or the stamp. If the bank statement is in any other language, please provide a translation and the translation should have the seal or an authorised signature of the Bank. The Bidder/Respondent should have a minimum of 20 percent of the quoted price in their bank account.
- 4.8.5. Proof of Previous works and awards for similar projects shall be provided, including testimonials and contact details for references.

## 5. PREPARATION AND SEALING OF THE PROPOSAL

- 5.1. All correspondence in connection with the Proposal and all accompanying documents, which are relevant to its examination, shall be written in ENGLISH language only. Translation must be provided where the correspondences are in any other language.
- 5.2. Each Proposal shall be accompanied by the following documents. Marks will be deducted for the documents as per the submission criteria.
- 5.2.1. Completed Cover Letter as provided in Appendix 1;
  - 5.2.2. Completed Checklist as provided in Appendix 4 indicating the whereabouts of the necessary information and required documents within the Proposal;
  - 5.2.3. Each Bidder/Respondent should submit all the documents mentioned in **4.8 (Elements of proposal submission)**
  - 5.2.4. A detailed cost breakdown of the services. All should be in US Dollar (\$);

## FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC

- 5.2.5. The Proposal shall be signed by the authorized signatory of the Respondent;
- 5.2.6. The Proposal shall contain no alterations, omissions or additions, except those to comply with instructions issued by MMPRC, or as necessary to correct errors made by the Respondent, in which case such corrections shall be initialed by the person or persons signing the Proposal.

### 6. EVALUATION PROCESS

- 6.1. To assist in the examination, evaluation, and comparison of Bids, MMPRC may, at its discretion, ask any Bidder for clarification of its Bid. The request for clarification and the response shall be in writing, but no change in the price or substance of the Bid shall be sought, offered, or permitted except as required to confirm the correction of arithmetic errors discovered by MMPRC in the evaluation of the Bids.
- 6.2. From the Bid Due Date until the issue of the Letter of Award, if any Bidder wishes to contact MMPRC on any matter related to the Bid or the Bid Process, it should be done in writing.
- 6.3. Any effort on the part of the Bidders to influence MMPRC in the examination, evaluation, ranking of Bids may result in the rejection of the respective Bidder's Bid.
- 6.4. Prior to detailed evaluation of the Bid, MMPRC will examine the Bid to determine whether it is compliant, i.e. whether;
  - 6.4.1. The Bid is complete in all respects with due authorization;
  - 6.4.2. The documents have been properly signed and provided in the prescribed Formats;
  - 6.4.3. The Bid is responsive.
- 6.5. A responsive Bid is one that conforms to all the terms, conditions, and specifications of the RFP without material deviation or reservation.
- 6.6. A material deviation or reservation is one:
  - 6.6.1. Which limits in any substantial way, MMPRC's rights or the Bidder's obligations; or
  - 6.6.2. The rectification of which would affect unfairly the competitive position of other Bidders presenting responsive Bids.
- 6.7. If a Bid is not responsive and/or is incomplete, it will not be included for further consideration, and may not subsequently be made responsive by correction or withdrawal of the non-conforming deviation or reservation.
- 6.8. Bids determined to be responsive will be checked by MMPRC for any arithmetic errors.
- 6.9. Where there is a discrepancy between the amounts in figures and in words, the amount in words shall govern.
- 6.10. The discrepancy between the amounts in figures and in words will be adjusted by MMPRC with the concurrence of the Bidder, and shall be considered as binding upon the Bidder. If the Bidder does not accept the corrected amount, the Bidder's Bid shall be rejected.

## FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC

- 6.11. Bids determined to be responsive, the arithmetic errors of which, if any, have been corrected, shall be evaluated and compared based on the Evaluation Criteria stated in this RFP.
- 6.12. Variations, alternative offers, and other factors that are in excess of the requirements of the stated in the RFP shall not be taken into account in the evaluation of the Bid.

### 7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Responsive Bids will be evaluated according to the following criteria;

- 7.1. **Price (45 Marks)**  
The Bid proposing the lowest “Retainer Fee” shall receive a maximum score of Forty Five (45) marks, and points will be allocated to other Bids according to pro-rata basis.
- 7.2. **Profile (10 marks)**
  - a) Company Profile.
  - b) Tax registration certificate. In case if tax registration certificate is not available in bidder country, please provide an official document stating which type of tax registration is provided in the bidder country. If Certificates or documents are in any other language, English translation should be provided.
  - c) Company registration certificate. If Certificates are in any other language English translation should be provided.
- 7.3. **Experience (15marks)**  
Where supporting document have been provided to MMPRCs’ satisfaction, points for experience with related works will be given as mentioned below. Following are the supporting documents that are required.
  - Reference Letters or emails of similar past projects of minimum 3 parties along with contact details.
- 7.4. **Proof of sample translations (20 marks)**  
Proof of sample translations done for the reference letters submitted. If the documents are not in English, English translation should be submitted.
- 7.5. **Delivery (10 marks):**  
Marks will be awarded on Pro rata basis but the Maximum delivery period is 30 days upon signing of the contract.

### 8. AWARD OF CONTRACT

- 8.2. MMPRC will issue the Letter of Award to the Bidder whose Bid has been determined to be responsive, and has the highest score (the “Selected Bidder”).
- 8.3. The Letter of Award will be issued to the Selected Bidder or posted to the Selected Bidder’s address or a scanned version of the Letter of Award shall be sent via e-mail at the address given in the Bid and such handing or posting or e-mail shall be deemed good service of such a notice.
- 8.4. If the Selected Bidder fails to sign the Agreement within the Bid Validity Period (unless an alternate timeline is prescribed in the Letter of Award, in which case the Selected Bidder shall conform to the requirements in the Letter of Award), MMPRC shall have the right at its absolute discretion to select the Bid with the highest score among the remaining responsive Bidders, or annul the Bidding Process.

**FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC**

- 8.5. MMPRC reserves the right to annul the Bidding Process and reject all Bids, at any time prior to signing of the Agreement, without thereby incurring any liability to the Bidders, or any obligation to inform the Bidders of the grounds for MMPRC's action.

***[END]***

FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC

APPENDIX 1  
BID FORM

Date: .....

The Managing Director,  
Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation  
H. Zonaria, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Boduthakurufaanu Magu, Male'  
Republic of Maldives

Dear Sir,

**Sub: Bid to Hire a Party to Translate Websites UI and Contacts for MMPRC**

Having examined all the information provided, we the undersigned offer to translate MMPRC website UI and contents as per the requirements of the RFP (the "Works") as set out in this Bid.

We agree to undertake and complete the Work for fee of USD ..... (\$ .....) (The 'Total Fee') inclusive of all applicable taxes.

We undertake, if our Bid is accepted, to complete the Work within the proposed Delivery Period and as per the specifications provided by MMPRC. We have examined the RFP and have no reservations to the RFP Documents, including Addenda issued.

We are not insolvent, in receivership, bankrupt or being wound up. Our affairs are not being administered by a court or a judicial officer and our business activities are not being suspended and not the subject of legal proceedings for any of the foregoing.

Until a formal agreement is executed with MMPRC, this Bid, together with written acceptance thereof and MMPRC's notification of award, shall constitute a binding contract if we are selected as the Successful Bidder.

Date this day of 2020.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

Duly authorized to sign Bid for and on behalf of: \_\_\_\_\_ (Company/business's name)

APPENDIX 2

Scope of Work and Deliverables

1. Translation of the entire website, including UI & Contents as mentioned below to the languages.
  - a. Phase 1: Translation support for Chinese, Russian and Arabic
  - b. Phase 2: Translation support for German, French and Italian
2. Follow correct grammar, punctuation, and capitalization conventions.
3. Choose terminology that is as “neutral” and “standard” as possible
4. Translated files to be sent in Microsoft Word format.
5. Please find the contents to be translated attached on the website

## FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MMPRC

### 1.1 CONTRACT PRICE & PAYMENT TERMS

Payment will be made by MMPRC in the manner set out below.

- The Total Price quoted for “MMPRC website translation” shall be transferred by MMPRC to the Selected Bidder, after the delivery of the final product within 20 working days and,
- Any payment made on behalf MMPRC will be reimbursed once the invoice along with supporting documents are received.
- Payment shall be in US Dollar/s with the mode of payment to be telegraphic transferred to designated bank account upon receiving the invoices.

FOR THE PURPOSE TO HIRE A PARTY TO TRANSLATE WEBSITES UI & CONTENT FOR MPRC

**APPENDIX 4  
CHECK LIST**

Please note that, the bidder should complete this check list and submit along with the proposal. Details of the points are highlighted in the RFP.

#	Description	Page Number	Remark (✓)
1	Budget Breakdown		
2	Profile		
3	Copy of Company Registration Certificate (If the Certificate is in any other language than ENGLISH, Bidder shall submit a translated copy of the Certificate)		
4	Reference Letters or emails of similar past projects		
5	Copy of Tax Registration Certificate (If the Certificate is in any other language than ENGLISH, Bidder shall submit a translated copy of the Certificate)		
6	Delivery details		

APPENDIX 5

WEBSITE UI & CONTENTS TO BE TRANSLATED

#NATURE #PLACES

**Addu Nature Park**

Addu Atoll is the southernmost atoll in the Maldives atoll chain. There are altogether five inhabited islands, which form six administrative districts, in the atoll. The islands on the western flank of the atoll are connected by a 16-kilometer link road and stretches from Hithadhoo in the north to Gan in the southernmost point of the atoll. The atoll consists of islands that have their very own unique characteristics that are quite different from the rest of the country.

Addu Atoll hosts the second largest wetlands area in the Maldives. The Addu Nature Park encompasses the beautiful *Eydhigali Kilhi* wetlands and protected *Koathey* area in Hithadhoo Island. The park features charming piers extending out to the lakes, mangroves and scenic cycling routes through the lush vegetation of the wetlands. You can take a guided nature tour through the park and observe the unique fauna and flora of the rich habitat. Canoeing in the bay area known as *Bedhi* famous for its beautiful red mangroves, baby stingrays and sharks is one of the most memorable experience in the Park.

**Getting There**

The flight time to Gan from Velana International Airport is approximately one and a half hours. Several daily flights operate from Velana International Airport. International airlines also operate to Gan, mainly from Colombo.

Links

Resorts in Addu Atoll

Guesthouses in Addu Atoll

## #PLACES #NATURE

### **Baa Atoll Biosphere Reserve**

Baa Atoll located in the central region of the atoll chain that form the Maldives is considered globally significant in terms of its biodiversity. The atoll covers an area of over 139,000 hectares and is situated just north of the Kaashidhoo channel that geographically separates the northern chain of atolls from the central chain. Baa atoll consists of several habitats that support the rich biodiversity of the atoll and includes coral reefs, islands, sea grass beds and mangroves.

Coral reefs are the most important habitat type in terms of area as well as biodiversity and is home to a high diversity of reef species, which includes 1,200 reef associated marine species, 250 species of stony and soft corals and populations of marine turtles, manta rays, whale sharks and seabirds. These also include threatened and endangered species such as the green turtle, hawksbill turtle, Napoleon wrasses, and tawny nurse shark.

The reserve consists of nine core areas in which extraction of any kind is prohibited. The areas are highly protected and are conferred the highest levels of conservation. They are clearly defined management areas that have a high ecological significance in terms of marine and terrestrial biodiversity. The limited activities permitted within the boundaries of these areas are monitored through stringent management systems, codes of conduct and due diligence from all users. Anchoring of any boat, unless in emergencies is prohibited in these areas.

Around the Core Areas are buffer zones which are also managed and monitored. Here non-damaging, non-extractive uses are allowed. Core areas and the buffer zones are enveloped by transitional areas, which cover the whole of Baa Atoll. Sustainable activities are permitted in the transitional areas.

Hanifaru Bay is the highlight when it comes to Baa Atoll's biodiversity, attracting large numbers of visitors every year. This tiny Bay located on the eastern flank of the atoll has seen some of the largest gatherings of manta rays anywhere in the world. Up to a hundred of these gentle giants are seen in a single congregation, gliding through the waters to feed as the tide pushes abundant plankton into the bay.

### **Getting There**

There are several daily flights from Velana International Airport to Dharavandhoo Airport offering convenient connections to international flights. The flight time to Dharavandhoo is approximately twenty minutes.

\*\*\*\*

Links: Resorts in Baa Atoll,

Guesthouses in Baa Atoll

Picture suggestions

Atoll Map with inhabited islands and resorts.

Pictures of mantas in Hanifaru Bay

Other marine species

Baa Atoll pictures

### **Dive Addu Atoll**

Addu Atoll offers a choice of stunning dives in a range of diverse dive locations. The reefs of the atoll were not affected by the coral bleaching event of 1998 which affected the rest of the country and therefore you can expect to see healthier coral growth wherever you dive. The atoll is also suitable for less advanced divers as the currents are weaker than at most other dive sites around the country.

The atoll offers the opportunity to dive with mantas throughout the year. One of the most exciting dives in the atoll is the British Loyalty wreck, a British naval vessel that was torpedoed by German U-boats during World War II. Other highlights include the Shark Point where you can see grey reef sharks in what has become known as the 'Shark Hotel', the Turtle Point where hawksbill and green sea turtles are seen regularly and the Kandu Huraa Region, with four different dive points and home to a plethora of marine life including mantas, nurse sharks, turtles and rays. Gan Inside is perfect for beginners where it is shallower yet offers a variety of marine life round the year.

Link

Resorts in Addu Atoll

Guesthouses in Addu Atoll.

### **North Male' Atoll, dive highlights**

Male' Atoll offers a large number of varied and well-established dive sites for the avid diver. Being the first atoll to have established tourism, the dive sites in the atoll are among the most popular in the country. Amazing underwater scenery, marine species ranging from colorful reef fishes to large species such as manta and sharks are all on offer in the atoll.

The Maldives Victory Wreck is perhaps the most popular wreck dive in the atoll. The wreck sits at a depth of about 35 meters and since it sank in 1981, it has been encrusted with an amazing array of colorful corals. Groupers, fusiliers and batfish are among its residents.

Although Ari Atoll is famous for its pelagics, North Male' Atoll offers some parallels. Located in the southeast of the atoll, Manta Point is famous for its mantas which gather at the site to feed during the southwest monsoon from May to October. The reef offers a colorful array of corals and a variety of marine life.

Nassimo Thila with its beautiful caves and coral formations, HP Reef with its caves and crevices, and Banana Reef with its wealth of fish and sea life are also some of the most popular dive sites in North Male' Atoll.

Link

Resorts in North Male' Atoll

## **Surfing in the Maldives**

The Maldives is located right in the middle of the Indian Ocean and benefits from full exposure to southern swells and to excellent surfing conditions on the outer reefs of atolls. With an average water temperature of around 28-degree Celsius, surfing conditions are good throughout the surfing season from in mid-February to November, however you can experience the best conditions from March to May and September to end of November.

North Male' Atoll was the first to be discovered for its waves and hence it is the most popular with surfers and the most accessible as well due to the large number of resorts and its close proximity to the international airport. The consistent waves at various surf points in the atoll offer some of the longest rides in the country. Some famous surf locations in the atoll include Cokes at Thulusdhoo, Lhohis, at Lhohifushi island, Jailbreaks, Honky's, Male' Island Point, Sultans and Ninjas, all along the eastern rim of the atoll.

For many surfers, Huvadho Atoll, in the southern group of the atoll chain offers the coolest waves in the Maldives, most of them located on the southern rim of the atoll. Beacons, Tiger Stripes, Castaways, Blue Bowls, Airports, Five Islands, Two Ways, Love Charms and Antiques are some of the well-known surf points in the atoll.

Resorts in Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll

Resorts in Gaafu Alifu Atoll

## **The Shipyard, Lhaviyani Atoll**

The Shipyard is one of the biggest dive attractions in Lhaviyani Atoll. There are two wrecks in this location both of which are covered with a variety of soft and hard corals. The wrecks are forty years old. The bow of one of the wrecks protrudes out of the surface and therefore it is a sight you may come across when you are travelling inside the atoll. While one of the vessels, sits upright, the other is on its side at about 30 meters below the surface. There is a profusion of corals on both the wrecks because of the currents that pass through the channel. The wrecks are home to a multitude of fish including, schools of yellow sweeper, butterfly fish, damsels, Napoleon wrasse among many others. Several morays have also made their home in the wreck. The channel is also a hangout for large pelagics, nurse sharks and grey reef sharks. Dive trips to the site are organized by resorts and guesthouses in the atoll.

Links

Resorts in Lhaviyani Atoll

Guest houses in Lhaviyani Atoll

### **Honeymooning in Maldives**

Are you tying the knot? Then Maldives would be on your mind. The Maldives is one of the most desired honeymoon destinations in the world. One wonders why?

The Maldives offers a holiday away from the hustle and bustle of city life. The islands offer privacy and a feeling of being ‘away from it all’ and conjures up images of shallow, crystal clear lagoons, white sandy beaches, waves lapping on to the soft white sand. One can imagine walking along the beach with your most beloved hand in hand. It’s the stuff that romance is made of.

Many resorts offer special honeymoon packages, including specially designed and furnished honeymoon suites as well as lots of other goodies such as special massage therapy in the resort’s spa for honeymooning couples.

The honeymoon holiday does not have to be immediately after the wedding; some resorts allow special rates and complimentary extras for couples on honeymoon up to six months after the day of their wedding.

Resorts respect the desire of those on honeymoon to be alone and you can be assured that you can get plenty of that. That is one of the joys of holidaying in the Maldives – guests are left alone to do as they please.

### **A fairytale wedding on the beach**

Getting married is one of the most important events in a person’s life. It is an occasion to be remembered. A great way to make the occasion memorable is to have the affirmation of marriage and the wedding celebration in the Maldives. There are several resorts that have been licensed to perform “symbolic weddings”. Even a couple that has not undergone a civil ceremony can celebrate a symbolic marriage in Maldivian resorts. A symbolic wedding does not impose any legal obligations on each other as it is a ceremonial commitment by a couple to commemorate their romantic bond. The couple will be issued a symbolic wedding certificate.

The ceremony can be performed in the language of the couple’s choice and can be held anywhere in the resort: on a resort’s sandbank, sailboat, jetty, or in a special pavilion erected on the beach. Some weddings have even been performed underwater. The occasion can be a fusion of local tradition with the couple dressed in Maldivian costumes with local Bodu Beru drummers providing the music, or it can follow a more conventional style.

A Maldives wedding is not only an occasion for newlyweds. It can be a ‘renewal of vows’ or a “second wedding” perhaps on a wedding anniversary, as a means of expressing and confirming enduring love for your spouse. It’s a unique way for a happily married couple to celebrate the years together and have a memorable holiday together at the same time.

### **The honeymoon of your dreams**

These picture-perfect islands are a real-life desert-island fantasy with accommodation that is secluded and guarantees privacy. If you want a honeymoon that's exclusively yours, the Maldives is ideal. Each resort is on its own island; there are no strangers, only caring staff and other guests, who value your privacy too.

Crystal clear lagoons, vibrant coral reefs and white-sandy beaches come as standard, while candlelit dinners under starry skies, exclusive upgrades and bespoke experiences-for-two make for an extra special start to married life.

Elegant overwater villas on columns above the lagoon are especially popular with honeymooners because of their romantic location away from it all. Many come with open-to-the-stars bathrooms, private plunge pools and steps directly down into the lagoon. From the balcony, views stretch to the horizon as the moon bathes you and your partner in its seductive glow.

After a few days adjusting to your new surroundings take a sunset champagne cruise, picnic on a sandbank and even be marooned on a desert island for a day or be pampered in the glamorous spa. Do something really extraordinary like an underwater ride in the whale submarine or take a seaplane photo flight. Perhaps ten days is the minimum time for a honeymoon, but we are sure you would want to stay, to keep that feeling going.

### **Flyboarding: pump up the adrenaline**

Flyboarding is an extreme sport taking water skiing to a new direction - upwards. It's a thrill seeker's dream that enables the participant to shoot up into the air and zoom over the waves. The flyboard itself is strapped to the feet of the user and is connected to a jet ski by a hose. The power of the jet ski emits water through the hose, jettisoned out at great pressure beneath the flyboard. This powers it and the flyboarder, supported by the hose, up to about 9m to 10m above the water. The flyboarder controls everything about the flyboard except how much power it's receiving. The power portion of the experience is controlled by a certified instructor on the accompanying jet ski.

Check out with your chosen resort if they can offer you this great rush of adrenaline.

### **Swimming with Mantas**

The Maldives offers one of the best access to snorkeling or diving with mantas. Mantas roam in groups entering channels and even the shallower lagoons of island along the reef edge. A ten-minute boat ride from your island and you can be in the water in the presence of mantas, gracefully swimming around you as they feed on the abundant plankton that rushes into the atoll with the tides, sometimes coming so close to you and staring right at you through your mask to check you out

In Ari Atoll there are several areas that are popular with pelagic lovers. The sites offer the most predictable manta dives. Although they follow a seasonal migratory pattern, they are found in these sites year-round. During the northeast monsoon from November to April, there is a greater presence of mantas on the western side of the atoll and they move over to the eastern side during the southwest monsoon from May to October.

The location and formation of Baa Atoll makes it one of the most exciting locations for manta lovers. Planktons is funneled in through the channels and into Hanifaru Bay in the atoll creating a concentration of

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plankton, attracting hundreds of manta rays during the southwest monsoon. Here you can observe what is known as cyclone feeding when over a hundred mantas congregate to feed in the plankton rich waters of the bay.

### **Utheemu Ganduvaru**

Utheemu Ganduvaru is the birthplace and home of Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu, one of the most revered heroes in Maldivian history. Utheemu Ganduvaru, which translates to Utheemu Palace is located in Utheemu in Haa Alifu Atoll, in the northernmost extremes of the Maldives.

In 1558 the Portuguese invaded the Maldives killing the Sultan in battle and establishing their rule over Maldives. Mohamed Thakurufaanu, and his brothers Ali and Hassan left the Maldives to Minicoy to make preparations for their campaign to free the country from Portuguese rule. Kalhuohfummi, the boat they built for their campaign, played a crucial role in their efforts. The band of fighters led by the Mohamed Thakurufaanu and his brothers fought the Portuguese for eight years. In order to evade capture, they would land on different islands in the darkness of the night, fought the Portuguese and left before daybreak. Eventually they landed in Male' and defeated the Portuguese leadership in the capital. Free from the shackles of the Portuguese, the people chose Mohamed Thakurufaanu as the Sultan.

Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu ruled the Maldives for 12 year until his death in 1585. He is recognized as a Sultan who was considerate, just and concerned for the well-being of the poorest. Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu is also credited with establishing the first formal military unit in the country.

### **Muleeaage, the official residence of the President**

Today Muleeaage is the official palace of the President and is a must-see in any Male' tour. Muleeaage marked its hundredth anniversary in 2019. The Palace that stand today was built during the period 1914 to 1919. The site was the ancestral home of former Sultans and royalty. However, Muleeaage never served as a Sultan's Palace.

Muleeaage was built by Sultan Mohamed Shamsuddeen III for his son Prince Hassan Izzuddeen in preparation for his arrival in the Maldives after completing his education in Ceylon. The Prince occupied the Palace from 1920 to 1934. The Prince was arrested, and the building was in disuse until World War II. Since then except for brief periods the building was used for various government administrative purposes or as a residence for visiting heads of states and other dignitaries.

During the First Republic between 1952 and 1953, President Mohamed Ameen Didi made Muleeaage the official Presidential Palace. However, since the end of the First Republic Muleeaage once again, was used for various administrative purposes. The first President of the Second Republic, President Ibrahim Nasir once again declared Muleeaage the Presidential Palace in 1968. However, he resided there only for a brief period. Since then Presidents have made Muleeaage their official residence for varying periods of time. The current President, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has resided in Muleeaage since he took office in November 2018.

### **Hukuru Miskiiy and Munnaaru**

Hukuru Miskiiy built in 1658 and the minaret adjacent to the mosque built in 1675 are the oldest built structures in Male' today. In addition to being the most revered center of worship for many centuries, Hukuru Miskiiy is of great cultural and historical significance to the Maldives and stands witness to the skills of Maldivian craftsmen of the time.

The mosque is built with interlocking coral blocks that are adorned with intricate coral carvings. The roof is supported by cut coral columns and its vaulted, decorated ceiling fashioned by master carpenters. Its interiors contain masterpieces of traditional Maldivian woodcarving and lacquer work.

The area adjacent to the mosque contains a 17th-century graveyard with intricately carved tombstones and tombs. The tombstones with rounded tops mark the graves of women and the ones with the pointed tops mark the graves of men. Gilded inscriptions on the tombstones indicate that the grave belongs to royalty.

Hukuru Miskiiy was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2008 for its unique architecture, its unparalleled historic tradition and the tongue-in-groove technique of its stone structure, which demonstrates a highly developed building technique for the period of its construction. According to the assessment made by UNESCO "The architecture, construction and accompanying artistry of the mosque and its other structures represent the creative excellence and achievement of the Maldivian people".

### **Kaashidhoo, Kuruhinna tharaagandu**

The island of Kaashidhoo lies about 86 kilometers from Male, the capital. Although the island belongs to the administrative region of Male' Atoll, the Kaashidhoo atoll is a separate natural atoll north of Male' Atoll, separated by the Kaashidhoo Channel. Kaashidhoo is known for its agriculture and is one the biggest suppliers of fresh fruits and vegetables to the Male' market.

The island is the site of one of the largest archeological sites in the country that demonstrates the Buddhist past of the Maldives before the advent of Islam in the twelfth century.

The site known as the Kuruhinna tharaagandu are the ruins of an ancient Buddhist monastery believed to have been in use in the pre-Islamic period. The excavation conducted between 1996 and 1998 revealed the ruins of what would have been a sprawling monastery complex with multiple structures. The excavated site is almost 1900 square kilometers and revealed more than sixty coral stone structures, which archeologists believe is just a part of the whole complex. As one would expect only the lower part of structures have survived during the nine hundred years since it has been abandoned.

Kaashidhoo is linked with Male', by ferry services. Contact your guesthouse or resort for further information on schedules.

Links Kaashidhoo guesthouses

### **Old Mosque, Isdhoo, Laamu Atoll**

The Isdhoo Old Mosque is a historical site of great significance. It was here that historians discovered the Isdhoo Loamaafaanu, the oldest written records found in the Maldives. The Loamaafaanu is the oldest copper-plate book to have been discovered in the Maldives to date. The book was written in AD 1194 (590 AH) in the Evēla Dhivehi script, an old Dhivehi script that is no longer in use.

The Old mosque in the island of Isdhoo was built in 1701 CE during the reign of Sultan Ali VII and continues its use as a mosque till today. The mosque complex has the mosque building, old well and a cemetery with tombstones. With its fine carvings, entrance steps, carved wooden doors, lacquer calligraphy and decoration, the quality of workmanship is some of the finest in the country.

It is one of the finest surviving examples of a small coral stone mosque and has been maintained with minimal changes and in good condition. It is believed that the mosque was built from excessive materials left over after building the Malé Hukuru Miskiiy.

The mosque is located in a remote part of the island as it is usually the case with mosques built during those times.

#### **Links**

Resorts in Laamu Atoll

Guesthouses in Laamu Atoll

### **Geography**

The Maldives is a nation of islands in the Indian Ocean, that spans across the equator. The country is comprised of 1192 islands that stretch along a length of 871 kilometers. While the country covers an area of approximately 90,000 square kilometers, only 298 square kilometers of that is dry land. The islands are grouped into a double chain of 26 atolls.

The country's unique geography mesmerizes the visitor. Reefs that offer bands of color, tiny jewel-like islands rimmed with the whitest of soft sand surrounded by the clearest shallow waters that one can imagine. Only 200 of the islands are inhabited, and a select few on each of the atolls are resorts and some of the islands are used for industry and agriculture.

The beauty of the Maldives is not only above the water. The Maldives is home to about five percent of the planet's reefs that comes with an explosion of color contributed by soft and hard corals that form them. The reefs are home to a thousand species of fish. Lured by the rich nutrients that flow in with the currents, large pelagic fishes such as manta rays and whale sharks also make the Maldives their home.

### **People**

While very little is known about the ancient history of the Maldives scholars and historians believe that the Maldives is an old nation populated well over 2500 years ago. The Maldivian race is the result of several waves of settlement from various parts of the Indian subcontinent and thousands of years of interactions of people of different races and ethnicities that crisscrossed the Indian Ocean over several centuries. The country's culture and traditions and the diverse physical traits of the people bear witness to the fact that the country was, due to its geographical location, a melting pot of people and cultures. The Maldivian language is Dhivehi, an Indo-Aryan language with its origins in Sanskrit.

The current population is estimated at just over half a million. A third of the population lives in Male', while the rest live in 200 island towns and villages scattered across the length of the country.

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The livelihood of Maldivians traditionally depended on the seas, fishery being the main source of sustenance. While fishery still contributes significantly to the economy in terms of employment and income, tourism is the main source of income for the Maldivian economy today.

### **Culture**

Although home to just over half a million people the Maldives has its own unique culture and traditions. While heavily influenced by various cultures around the rim of the Indian Ocean, the Maldivian culture, craft and traditions have been shaped by the island environment and the seas that surround us.

Dhivehi is the language of the Maldivian people. Our current script, Thaana is unique and was developed from Arabic numerals around the 16th century. Maldivians are master boat builders. The traditional Maldivian boat, dhoni has been shaped over centuries, resulting in a craft that perfectly suits the various conditions of the seas. The traditional cuisine is heavily based on fish and coconut, with several dishes that have no parallels anywhere in the region. Our music and dance display strong influences of East Africa, Arabia and the Indian subcontinent. There is a rich tradition of Maldivian crafts; lacquered wooden ornaments, finely woven reed mats, and coral carvings are crafts that have been passed down through several generations.

### **The environment**

The Maldives has one of the most delicate environments anywhere on the planet. Coral reefs are the foundation of the islands. They offer protection to the tiny islands as its natural defense system, and the country's economy depends heavily on the health of its reefs and ecosystems.

Several conservation efforts are underway to protect the valuable marine environment of Maldives. While several marine species and birds are protected by law, protected areas have been designated to ensure the conservation of specific ecosystems and the rich biodiversity of the country. This includes designated nature reserves in islands of various atolls to protect wetlands and mangroves and the protection of marine areas and the designation of biosphere reserves that covers coral reefs, islands, sea grass beds and mangroves.

Several resorts too conduct their own programs. While some programs conducted by resorts focus on the protection and rehabilitation of sea turtles, others are engaged in cutting edge research on regeneration of coral reefs. Several community education programs are also conducted by resorts for school children and the community at large. Non-governmental organizations also play an important role through their voluntary programs and conduct regular beach and reef clean up programs.

Visitors to Maldives are advised to carry back their own non-biodegradable waste and to take care not to stand on, touch or remove coral structures while snorkeling or diving.

### **Connectivity**

The Maldives is well connected with the rest of the world. Several flights from Europe, Middle East and South East Asia operate to Velana International Airport, the main gateway to the Maldives. The highest international traffic is from Colombo, Sri Lanka, various Indian cities and Dubai, while several scheduled and charter flights bring in passengers from all major European capitals, and South East Asian cities.

Once in the Maldives you can travel to any of the twelve domestic and international airports to which several daily flights are operated. Scheduled ferry services also operate from Male' to most of the atolls.

If you are travelling to a resort, your transfer will most likely be prearranged at the time of booking your accommodation. Transfers to resorts around the airport are by speedboat and transfers to resorts and islands further afield are by seaplane.

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### Travel information

**Time:** 5 hours ahead of GMT

**International telephone code:** +960

**Electricity:** 240 volts.

**Mobile services:** Prepaid SIM cards are available from two mobile service providers at the airport. The SIM cards can be used for local and international call and for data.

**Currency:** The Maldivian Rufiyaa is the local currency. All major credit cards are accepted in the country.

**Visa:** All nationalities receive a 30-day visa on arrival, provided that you have a valid passport, an onward ticket to continue your journey and a reservation at a tourist facility or enough funds to cover your stay in the country.

**Taxes:** A Tourism Goods and Service Tax (TGST) of 12% is levied on all goods and services at tourist establishments. A Green Tax of US\$ 6.00 per person per day is payable for guests staying at tourist accommodation except guest houses where the Green Tax is US\$ 3.00 per person per day.

**Travel and transfer:** Speedboat transfer is the norm to resorts close to the International Airport. The rest is covered by seaplane or domestic flight. If you are travelling to Male' you can take a taxi from the airport. Several daily flights operate from Velana International Airport to the 12 domestic and international airports in the country. Scheduled ferries also operate from Male' to many of the atolls.

**Alcohol:** Import of alcohol by individuals is not permitted. However, alcohol is available at all the resorts.

**Weather:** Year-round temperature hot tropical climate. The average high temperature is 31.5oC and the average low temperature is 26.4oC. The Southwest monsoon from May to October brings rain and the Northeast monsoon from November to April is generally sunny.

**Clothing:** Cotton clothes suits well with the hot tropical climate of the Maldives. Tourist are expected to respect local culture and dress modestly when visiting or staying on inhabited islands. Sandals are ideal, as you may often want to slip them off and go barefoot.

**Medical services:** The main public hospital Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital and private hospitals ADK and Treetop are located in Male'. Each Atoll has at least one hospital and most resorts have their own clinics and in-house doctors.

### STAY Section

#### Resorts

From clublike resorts to chic boutique resorts, from those which offer family fun to those that are exclusive to adults. Choose one that suits your style.

#### Hotels

If you are visiting the Maldives on business, staying at a hotel in Male' is convenient. A range of hotels varying in size and standards are available.

#### Guesthouses

A guesthouse stay offers a different experience. Your stay will be in a local town where you would get the chance to mingle with the people and get a taste of the county's culture.

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### **Liveboards**

Liveboards offer you the opportunity to see more of the Maldives. Liveboards offer dedicated surf and dive cruises or you can choose one for a leisurely cruise to various atolls.

### **Romantic side of life**

Tread the soft white sands of the beach as you walk hand in hand, letting the gentle waves lap your feet. Feel the breeze on your face and immerse in the music made by the rustle of the palms. You leave footsteps behind, as you color the dreams of your life ahead. There is no better place for romance, where all the ingredients for love come together in perfect harmony, where you commit or recommit to each other to love and to cherish for the rest of your lives.

No matter where you stay in the Maldives, there's a sense of romance that you cannot evade. Love is in the air, wherever you are. No wonder the Maldives is one of the most desired honeymoon destinations for couples ready to tie the knot, across the world. A resort that's dedicated to romance, a bungalow nestled in the lush vegetation, a villa over water looking out on the horizon, a wedding on the beach, a renewal of vows, it's yours to choose. Whatever you choose, you will carry with you, boundless memories for the rest of your journey together.

### **Maldivian side of life**

The Maldives is made up of thousand two hundred islands, all different in their own unique ways. The geography of the country alone is something one would not get tired of observing. The archipelago is made up of 26 atolls; rings formed of islands and reefs of varying shapes, depths and sizes that present hues of blue, turquoise to indigo.

Visit any one of the country's two hundred inhabited islands and observe our distinctive lifestyle, shaped over millennia, by the unique make-up of the tiny islands we inhabit and the seas that surround us. Our culture, cuisine and craft have been shaped by the resources that were available from our surroundings and the skills that were brought in by the waves of settlers from around the Indian Ocean, who made the islands their home, over thousands of years.

Experience the relaxed attitude and style of islanders, which modernization has found impossible to change. Stroll on the beach, engage with the locals and get an insight into their lives. Who knows, you could get invited to visit one of their homes and meet their families.

### **Spiritual side of life**

In the Maldives, a spa is, let's say, more than just a spa. It's an experience, a journey that will touch your soul. A journey that you can indulge yourself in, and an opportunity to splurge on your mind, body and soul.

Resort spas not only match the luxurious environs and the classy touches of their cozy bungalows and sexy villas. Spas in Maldives are an experience in themselves. Sprawling garden spas, with massage rooms merged into their lush tropical surroundings, or one built on stilts over the crystalline waters of the lagoon, it's for you to choose. Immerse yourself in meditation. Just you and the boundless blue horizon, where the endless sea merges into the sky, with not a speck that distracts you from your mind.

If total indulgence is not your cup of tea, just get a good relaxing massage after a day of fun, sun and activity. Choose any massage that you desire and give yourself in to the calming ambience and the competent hands of the highly skilled masseurs. Every spa offers a world of secure serenity where exotic therapies defy the imagination.

### **Thrilling side of life**

The Maldives is 99% water and just one percent land. And as one might expect, the thrills of the Maldives lie on, under or over the surface of the water. Wherever you choose to holiday in the Maldives, there is watersports on offer. But be mindful that some resorts prefer to offer their guests complete tranquility without the sound of motorized engines that propel many a ride on the water. But even those resorts would offer relaxing canoe rides, wind surfing, snorkeling and diving.

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If you are serious about the thrill, choose one of the resorts or a guesthouse on an island that offer them all. Bouncy banana rides with friends and family, a solo ride trimming the waves on a jet ski or skimming the lagoon at high speeds on a wakeboard, all of which would offer you that adrenaline rush you seek to feel rejuvenated and at one with the elements. For the serious water sports enthusiast there is kite surfing, parasailing or just navigating solo around the reefs on a catamaran.

There's more of course. Dedicate your holiday to test the surf breaks that dot the atolls. Or if you take diving seriously you can plan your dive holiday with a range of dives with night dives and wreck dives that will quench your thirst for the underwater.

### **Fun side of life**

The Maldives offers a host of facilities and opportunities to fuel your sense of excitement. Whether you are staying on a plush resort, a hotel in Male', or in a cozy guesthouse on an island in an atoll far away, there is a lot you can choose for yourself or for your family.

Entertainment and daily excursions are on the menu wherever you are. Excursions offer an experience for you or your family and friends, to take in more of the Maldives. Exploring sandbanks that dazzle under the midday sun, snorkeling over pristine reefs, and experiencing local island towns are part of half day or full day excursions. What's more, a barbeque on the beach for lunch is often thrown in to get that additional punch to the day's experience. How about night fishing or dolphin watching, swimming with whale sharks and mantas? On land there is beach volley, tennis, volleyball and badminton. For the kids there are child play areas and fun activities in many of the resorts.

If you stay in a guesthouse on an inhabited island, you will have the chance to meet Maldivians, experience local culture and cuisine, and join in what the islanders do for fun and relaxation, playing football in the late afternoon, lounging on one of the joalis near the beach or relaxing over a hot black tea and eating "short eats" in a seaside café.

### **Colorful side of life**

The Maldives is blessed with about 5% of the global reef area, and 250 species of coral, teeming with over 1000 species of fish. Nearly half those who visit the Maldives snorkel or dive and experience the colorful world beneath the surface. While some dedicate their holiday entirely to experience the magic underwater, others take a more leisurely approach. A dive center is an essential component of any resort and there are more than one dive centers in most of the guesthouse islands. Liveboards carry their own dive gear if the tour is dedicated to diving and all liveboards without exception would carry a collection of snorkeling equipment.

For a leisurely snorkel you can just wade from the beach to the house reef on most islands. Resorts and guesthouses also organize their very own snorkeling excursions. If you intend to dive, just visit the dive school on the island as soon as you arrive. The dive guides would work out a schedule for you to suit your requirement. Dive schools offer dive courses leading to certification from beginner level to advanced and dive courses are conducted in many languages.