

# EXPLORE!



## Maldive Dhoni Cruise

On this holiday, we cruise among the remote atolls of the idyllic Maldives, aboard a traditional dhoni. We eat and sleep aboard the boat as we sail between the unspoilt palm-fringed tropical islands of South Male, Felidhoo and Meemu. Along our way, we visit small fishing village communities and stop to swim or snorkel at beautiful coral reefs.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Seven - day cruise** - Relax on board a traditional dhoni boat, with all meals included and freshly prepared by the boat crew
- ★ **Uninhabited islands and pristine beaches** - Visit unspoilt, idyllic corners of the Maldives, far away from the tourist resorts
- ★ **Remarkable snorkelling and swimming** - Enjoy warm, clear water and spot manta rays, turtles and clown fish on spectacular reefs
- ★ **Traditional fishing villages** - Spend time with the local people to gain an appreciation of their life in this tropical paradise
- ★ **Impressive barbeque banquet** - Prepared by the boat crew on a sublime white-sand beach

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

#### Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

**TRIP PACE:****Relaxed**

You can enjoy easy-going activities and experiences on these Relaxed pace tours, with opportunities to absorb the sights and immerse yourself in the local surroundings, but still come home feeling relaxed and refreshed.

**MINIMUM GROUP SIZE:****4**

General description for minimum group size

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Join tour in Male

Our tour begins today in Male and after meeting up with our Explore representative and the rest of the group we walk to our hotel close to the harbour. The circumference of the island is little more than 5 kilometers so it's very easy to explore on foot. After freshening up at the hotel we will walk down to the Mosque, to the fish market and along the waters edge to watch the ferries coming and going.



**Accommodation: Mookai Hotel** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Sail to Vavuu Atoll and explore Kuda Anbaraa Island

This morning we walk to the waterfront to meet our moored dhoni and crew. We take our breakfast on the boat and then begin cruising south for two to three hours, passing through the Vaadhoo Canal to the South Male Atoll - a smaller and quieter neighbour to the more developed North Male Atoll. Here, many of the islands are inhabited simply by vegetation and white sand, surrounded by clear turquoise water and reef. Heading further south we cruise to the Vavuu Atoll, where we spend time exploring the uninhabited and picturesque islands of Kudiboli and Kuda Anbaraa. When exploring this and other islands in the itinerary, it isn't necessary to bring special footwear. Most customers seem to manage well in flip-flops, and these have the obvious advantage of being quick to get on and off - ideal for walking through sand. Our afternoon is spent snorkelling or relaxing on board. Over the course of the week, underwater fauna we are likely to see include green turtles, reef sharks and gigantic manta rays, as well as smaller sting rays and eagle rays. At each stop, we will also swim among a rainbow of small, colourful fish, including the famous Clown Fish. Our knowledgeable Explore representative will be able to help identify many of the underwater species that we come across. Today, and each day, afternoon tea with freshly baked cake will be served by our talented chef. Every meal is included on the dhoni. Menus are likely to include freshly-caught fish each day, as well curries and pasta. Drinking water, tea and coffee are readily available, with alcoholic and soft drinks available for purchase on-board. US Dollars are accepted on the Dhoni and you can pay your bill for drinks at the end of your cruise. Our cabins are compact, but with plenty of room for two people and luggage. However, many customers choose to enjoy the tranquillity of sleeping under the stars on deck for at least some of the nights.



**Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni** (or similar)

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Simple Boat

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 3 - Snorkel in the clear waters of the Meemu Atoll

Today we sail south for a further two to three hours, crossing to Meemu Atoll - home to one of the longest stretches of reef in the Maldives. On this or other crossings, we may be lucky enough to be chased by spinner dolphins, who like jumping in our wake. We are also likely to see flying fish, sometimes leaping right over the deck of our dhoni. Meemu Atoll is made up of 34 islands, of which 25 are uninhabited. Some of the inhabited ones grow yams, and all of them are largely dependent on fishing. Here more than anywhere, we are likely to experience the true Maldivian way of life. Shortly after entering the atoll, we arrive at Fenboa Finolhu - another beautiful uninhabited island where we aim to base ourselves for the night. We will have plenty of time to enjoy the white-sand beach and to snorkel on the reef. This evening, we can look forward to a barbeque beach banquet in an idyllic spot on the island, laid on by the dhoni crew.



**Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni** (or similar)

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Simple Boat

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 4 - Cruise to Dhiggaru Island for a Bodu Beru display

After a relaxed start, we head east to the inhabited island of Dhiggaru. Here, we drop our anchor by a particularly good snorkelling reef. Later in the afternoon, when it has cooled down a bit, we plan to go ashore to meet the island's inhabitants. We may be struck by the traditional, yet relaxed, way of life in the island's lively village. Very few tourist groups visit and we must remember to dress and act respectfully, removing our shoes when visiting a house or a mosque. In the evening, we hope to be invited to a performance of Bodu Beru (Big Drum) - the traditional folk music of the country.



**Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni** (or similar)

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Simple Boat

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 5 - Visit the traditional village of Felidhoo

Today, we head back to Felidhoo Atoll and its administrative centre, Felidhoo. With a population of about 400, this is the least populated of all the country's administrative centres. Again, we take time to visit the village and have the opportunity to enjoy another Bodu Beru performance.



**Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni** (or similar)

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Simple Boat

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Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

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## DAY 6 - Discover Hulhidhoo reef before sailing to Fulidhoo

By now, we are likely to be feeling completely relaxed, as our routine of reading, sunbathing and napping between island stops and snorkelling spots has become second nature. With a subtly different name to our previous day's stop-off, we break today's journey with a visit to Fulidhoo Island. Once again, we meet the locals and gain more of an appreciation of their life in this tropical paradise. After a further visit to the island of Hulhidhoo, we anchor by a large reef, where we can spend time snorkelling.



**Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni** (or similar)



Simple Boat



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 7 - Sail to Male stopping to snorkel at Embudhoo Reef

Our last full day on the boat sees us cruising back towards Male. We take the opportunity for some final snorkelling and swimming, before enjoying a farewell meal with our boat crew.



**Accommodation: Aboard Dhoni** (or similar)



Simple Boat



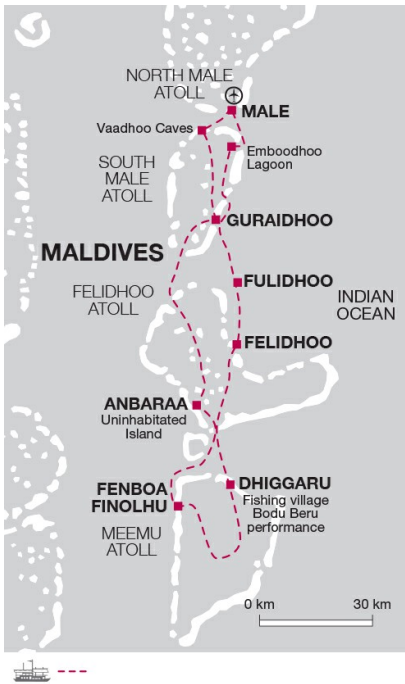
Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 8 - Tour ends in Male

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast. Once we have said our goodbyes to the crew, we disembark the dhoni and are transferred to Male International Airport.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



## Why book this trip

This tour is ideal if you want a chance to chill out and explore the real Maldives. The first night is spent in Male where we can experience the life of the majority of locals. The remainder of our trip consists of idyllic days filled with snorkelling, swimming and relaxing on deck or visiting traditional fishing villages and meeting the inhabitants of these beautiful islands.

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 7  
Lunch: 6  
Dinner: 6



### Transport

Boat



### Trip staff

Boat Crew  
Cook  
Explore Representative



### Accommodation

6 nights simple boat  
1 nights standard hotel

## Trip information

### Country information

### Maldives Holidays & Tours

#### Climate

Day time temperatures are remarkably consistent throughout the year ranging from 30°C to 32°C dropping to between 25°C and 26°C at night. Although rain is heaviest in June, July and August, heavy rain can fall at any time of year - even in February and March when statistically only 50mm usually falls during those months combined. The south-west monsoon lasts from May to November and not only brings the rains but also stronger winds and storms, although the transitional periods of early May and late November are supposed to be calm with exceptionally clear water.

#### Time difference to GMT

+5

**Plugs**

3 Pin Flat

**Religion**

Islam

**Language**

Dhivehi, English

## Budgeting and packing

### Clothing

Only lightweight clothing is needed. Local people in Male and in villages on the islands find western styles of dress extremely offensive. Brief shorts, tight fitting clothing etc. should be avoided by both men and women. A sarong and something to cover the head (for women) is recommended. Don't forget swimming gear and clothes to protect you from the sun including a wide brimmed hat. You may consider wearing a Tshirt whilst snorkelling to avoid bad sunburn on the back and shoulders.

### Footwear

Comfortable shoes and sandals.

### Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. A soft holdall is the best option as luggage is stored under the beds in the cabins. Remember you are expected to carry your own baggage - so don't overload yourself.

### Equipment

You may like to bring your own snorkel and mask although they will be provided on the Dhonis. Bring a torch. Also high factor sun protection and a hat. We recommend Factor 30 plus for snorkelling as the water intensifies the sun's strength. Both bath and beach towels are provided on the Dhoni.

### Tipping

**Local crew**

Local Staff: In this area, tipping is a recognised part of life. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow the equivalent of £25.00.

**International Departure Taxes**

A departure tax was introduced in mid 2013. This is now included in the cost of airline tickets so there should be nothing to pay on your departure.

**Country Information**

## Maldives Holidays & Tours

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

**Lunch price**

£7.50

**Dinner price**

£12.00

**Beer price**

£3.50

**Water price**

£1.70

## Foreign Exchange

**Local currency**

Rufiyaa.

**Recommended Currency For Exchange**

US Dollars are widely accepted in the Maldives and are the best currency for exchange.

**ATM Availability**

No Access

**Credit Card Acceptance**

Not accepted

**Travellers Cheques**

Not accepted

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Boat

### Accommodation notes

#### Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

We work with a local operator who owns a number of different Dhonis; all of which are different sizes with different layouts. The boats we are most likely to be using are 6-10 berth Dhonis and we will either use one or two boats depending on the group size and make-up. All Dhonis that we use are fitted with diesel engines, which are used most of the time that we are travelling. Some of the boats still have sails but these are used very infrequently. All Dhonis are inspected annually in order to retain their license. They carry enough lifejackets for all clients and crew plus buoyancy aids and a dinghy with small outboard engine. All boats have a CB radio, and for most of the voyage the boat is in mobile phone range of the islands. Full fire fighting equipment is also carried on every boat. There will be a minimum of 4 or 5 crew on board including the captain and cook - depending on the number of people on the boat. Most of the cabins offer couchette accommodation on a twin share basis with all bedding provided. The cabins are small and simple but adequate for sleeping and changing. In most of the cabins there will be bunk beds and so the person on the top will need to be prepared to climb up to their bed. Facilities are shared, and each boat has 3 or 4 toilets and 2 or 3 showers on board. There are plugs available in each cabin with electricity available when the boats generator is running (when the boat is moving or the crew are cooking meals) so it is possible to charge cameras and phones during the tour. Good quality snorkelling equipment including mask, snorkel, flippers and swim noodles are provided (we will ask for your shoe/flipper size before you travel!). You are free to bring your own equipment should you wish. No scuba diving equipment will be carried on board. All meals and a bottle of drinking water each day are provided on board the Dhonis. There is a bar for any additional soft and alcoholic drinks you may wish to buy, a dining area and a sundeck to relax and sunbathe throughout the day. It should be noted that it is not permitted for tourists to bring alcohol in to the country and it will be confiscated at the airport if you attempt to do so. People requiring a gluten free diet may struggle a little in the Maldives. Breakfasts are often mashuni - a tuna and coconut combination which is served with roti style bread or a more western start to the day with eggs and toast. Most lunches and dinners will have a pasta element and during the afternoons the boat crew will often bake a cake. Whilst plenty of fresh veg, meat and fruit is also provided if you do follow a gluten free diet you may wish to take some snacks with you to supplement the diet on board the dhoni.

## Essential information

## FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

## Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

## Visa Information

Maldives: Citizens of the UK, Australia, New Zealand, US and Canada are given a free 30 day permit on arrival. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. Flights via Sri Lanka: If your flight requires you to transit in Sri Lanka then you will not be required to obtain a Sri Lankan visa if your transit time is less than 48hrs. The Sri Lankan authorities require that your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after departure from Sri Lanka.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

## Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully



protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Non refundable permits**

## **Maldives Holidays & Tours**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis & polio. Travellers may wish to immunise themselves against meningitis. Please consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

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