

Maldives Snorkeling Adventure

April 14 - 27, 2013



Courtesy Maldives Promotion Tourist Board

When the monsoon tides whoosh across the Indian Ocean each year, a mélange of small marine creatures are born and microscopic plant cells blossom. This, in turn, creates a buffet for the hundreds of marine species that live in the nutrient-rich waters around the Maldives.

That's a key reason the Maldives is a snorkeler's dream – and one of the best destinations in the world to get under the sea. Experts say the Maldives' extensive and largely intact reefs comprise one of the most complex reef systems in the world.

Join WWF on our newest snorkeling adventure in the Maldives in April 2013.

- Sail aboard a finely appointed yacht, the *Maldives Siren*.
- Visit the farthest atolls of the Maldives, where few visitors ever go.
- Snorkel in waters with 200 types of coral and 2,000 known fish species, from the smallest clownfish to huge whale sharks.
- Travel in a group of just 12 WWF members.

Tour cost per person (double occupancy): \$9,460
Single supplement: \$1,800 (limited availability)
Limited to 12 travelers

Itinerary

Sunday & Monday, April 14 & 15, 2013: US / Malé, Maldives

Depart on an independent flight from the United States on Sunday, arriving in Malé on Monday afternoon. Transfer to a nearby seaside hotel, where you can spend the rest of the day at leisure before gathering for a welcome dinner. *Hulhule Island Hotel (D)*

Tuesday, April 16: Male / Kaadedhdhoo / Embark

In the late morning, transfer to the airport for a short flight to the island of Kaadedhdhoo, where the *Maldives Siren* will be waiting. After a short briefing and introductions to the crew, relax on board and enjoy the gorgeous island views as we set sail for the first of many ideal snorkeling spots and spend our nights onboard. *(B,L,D)*

Wednesday through Saturday, April 17-20: Huvadhoo Atoll

In the far south of the Maldivian archipelago lies a large, pristine atoll whose name means “the forbidden place.” That bodes well for the snorkeling we'll do here, as the *faru*, or ring-shaped reefs, surrounding the 230 mostly uninhabited islands in this area are largely untouched and the marine life abundant at its shallow reefs, walls, channels and offshore pinnacles.

Blacktip reef sharks, eagle rays and healthy schools of angel fish, surgeonfish, butterfly fish, damselfish, banner fish and trigger fish are plentiful at Kuredhoo Kandu. Conditions permitting, we'll look for sailfish

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during drift snorkels at Villingili Kandhu. Another spot, called Kodedhu Kandhu, is a likely destination to spot schools of barracuda.

In between four days of snorkeling outings and time aboard the yacht, we'll also venture onto land, including a visit to Thinadhoo, the atoll's capital. Walks along the beach may reveal juvenile reef sharks learning how to patrol in the sandy shallows at the water's edge. *(B,L,D daily)*

Sunday & Monday, April 21 & 22: Laamu Atoll

Wake in the morning at Laamu, the southernmost atoll in the central Maldives. Rimmed by barrier reefs, the atoll's shallow lagoon is spotted with uninhabited islands, hard coral gardens and outside reef pinnacles covered with hard and soft corals.

Our precise snorkeling spots will be determined by sea and weather conditions. Planned is a visit to Vadinolhu Kandhu, a channel frequented by whitetip reef sharks, Napoleon wrasse, tuna and snapper. Hitadhoo reef is another ideal spot for a drift snorkel.

On Monday evening, the yacht will head north en route to Kolhumadulu Atoll. *(B,L,D daily)*

Tuesday, April 23: Kolhumadulu (Thaa)

Also known as Thaa, the Kolhumadulu Atoll is comprised of 13 inhabited islands. Today's plan is to snorkeling the reefs at Thuvaroo Island and go in search of common dolphins at Kuralhi.

The southernmost uninhabited island of Olhugiri is well known for its mangroves and for providing the only perching site for the great frigatebird in the Maldives; green and hawksbill turtles are often seen here, too. And a night snorkel at Fahala Reef will take us in search of whale sharks and octopuses. *(B,L,D)*

Wednesday, April 24: Meemu Atoll

Cruise to Anbara & Picnic Island for snorkeling among hard and soft corals. Turtles, rays and a wide variety of reef fish congregate here. Meanwhile, at the ocean-facing reefs of Rakeedhoo, look for blue-fin jacks, hump head parrot fish and turtles.

Later, continue on to Vattaru Atoll for snorkeling in search of manta rays, tuna, snappers and Napoleon wrasse. A nighttime outing at the Anbara House reef is planned; looked for lobsters and reef squid, and perhaps be treated with a show of neon green bioluminescence. *(B,L,D)*

Thursday, April 25: South Male Atoll & Vaavu Atoll

Start the day with a drift snorkel at Vaavu Atoll and forays into the water at Miyaru Kandhu. The latter is an especially great spot for such pelagics as tuna, jacks, eagle rays and reef sharks. A great local secret is the variety of marine life – including nurse sharks, reef sharks and stingrays – that hang out and feed around the jetty at the Alimatha Resort; we'll hop in the water to see what we can find.

Following a last afternoon snorkel, perhaps from a permanent sand bank, enjoy a farewell dinner on board. *(B,L,D)*

Friday, April 26: Disembark / Male / Depart

After breakfast, disembark on Hulhule Island and check into the hotel, where a day room is at your disposal. You'll have the rest of the day free to relax or perhaps explore the nearby island where the capital city of Malé is centered; lunch and dinner are on your own. Transfer to the airport in the late evening for flights home. *Day room at Hulhule Island Hotel (B)*

Saturday, April 27: Home

Continue with flights home, arriving later in the day.

What to Expect

To fully enjoy the program's marine life- and wildlife-viewing opportunities, WWF travelers should be fit, in good health and able to participate in moderately strenuous activities. You should be an experienced snorkeler who is comfortable being in waters with moderately swift currents (including during drift snorkels) and should have the ability to stay in the water for an hour or more at a time. You also need to be able to pull yourself up from the water and into a Zodiac landing craft via a small ladder.

Air temperatures are usually in the upper 80s Fahrenheit with high humidity. Water temperatures are usually in the 80s. Currents, tides and other weather conditions may necessitate deviations from the daily itinerary; the guide and ship's crew will monitor all conditions. Detailed information, including a packing list, will be sent to participants.

While we will do everything possible to adhere to this itinerary, occasional weather conditions and/or local events may necessitate deviations. If you have any questions about whether this tour is right for you, please contact us.

About the *Maldives Siren*

The 111-foot *S/Y Maldives Siren* is a custom-designed, traditional Indonesian "gaft-rigged Phinisi" that has been specially outfitted with underwater enthusiasts in mind. Each of the seven cabins (6 reserved for guests and 1 for our guides), has an ensuite bathroom with hot water, individually controlled lighting and air conditioning and an audiovisual system including a personal computer. The ship includes a leisure deck, covered outdoor dining area, an air-conditioned saloon with cocktail bar and two Zodiac landing craft. Laundry and massage services are also available on board. Please refer to ship deck plan on page 5.

Terms & Conditions

Cost \$9,460 per person, based on double occupancy. Single supplement: \$1,800 (limited availability).

Group size Limited to 12 travelers.

Tour Cost Includes Accommodations, meals and activities as indicated in the itinerary; transportation within the Maldives; gratuities; entrance fees; group airport transfers and group baggage handling at hotels and airports in the Maldives; airport departure taxes; services of an expedition leader; WWF staff representative with 10 participants; comprehensive pre-departure materials.

Tour Cost Excludes International airfare; independent transfers; meals not indicated in the itinerary; personal expenses, such as travel insurance, laundry, telephone/fax/email charges, excess baggage fees

Environmental successes and challenges in the Maldives

As the lowest country in the world, the Maldives is extremely susceptible to the impacts of climate change. There are serious concerns that within the next 100 years the archipelago could become completely submerged because of rising sea levels.

In an effort to ensure the health of its marine resources – which attract tourists in droves – the country has banned the killing of sharks and turtles. Napoleon wrasse, dolphins, whale sharks and black coral are other protected species.

The government has banned destructive fishing practices including use of explosives, guns, chemicals and prohibits the use of scuba gear to collect sea cucumbers and lobsters. Additional efforts are being made to form new reefs and keep current ones healthy.

WWF praises the Maldivian government for its investments in alternative energies, with the goal of becoming a carbon neutral nation by 2020. Forestation is promoted for its ability to prevent beach erosion, and children learn environmental sciences in school. A strong focus is put on sustainable tourism and avoiding overdevelopment – generally only one resort per island is permitted.



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and alcoholic beverages (except beer and wine at the welcome and farewell dinners); additional costs incurred as a result of delays beyond our control; anything not specifically mentioned as included.

Singles/Shares Single accommodations are extremely limited on the trip. Should you wish to share a room, we will attempt to find a roommate for you. If we are unable to provide a roommate by the final invoice date, the single supplement will be assessed.

Deposit A deposit of \$1,000 per person, payable by check or credit card to WWF, confirms your space. A completed waiver of liability form is due within 14 days of registration. The final balance is due January 14, 2013 (90 days before departure) and will be charged to the credit card provided, or is payable by check made out to Asia Transpacific Journeys, WWF's tour operator for this program, if advanced arrangements are made.

Cancellations & Refunds Cancellation must be received in writing at WWF, by postal mail, email or fax. At the time WWF receives your written cancellation, the following per-person penalties will apply: On or before January 13, 2013: Full refund minus \$500. January 14, 2013 to February 14, 2013: Forfeit 50% of the tour cost along with any non-refundable costs paid to suppliers. On or after February 15, 2013: No refunds. Cancellation could cost you as much as 100% of your tour cost.

Insurance Trip insurance is highly recommended; information will be sent to registrants. Exclusions for preexisting medical conditions may be waived with the prompt purchase of travel insurance.

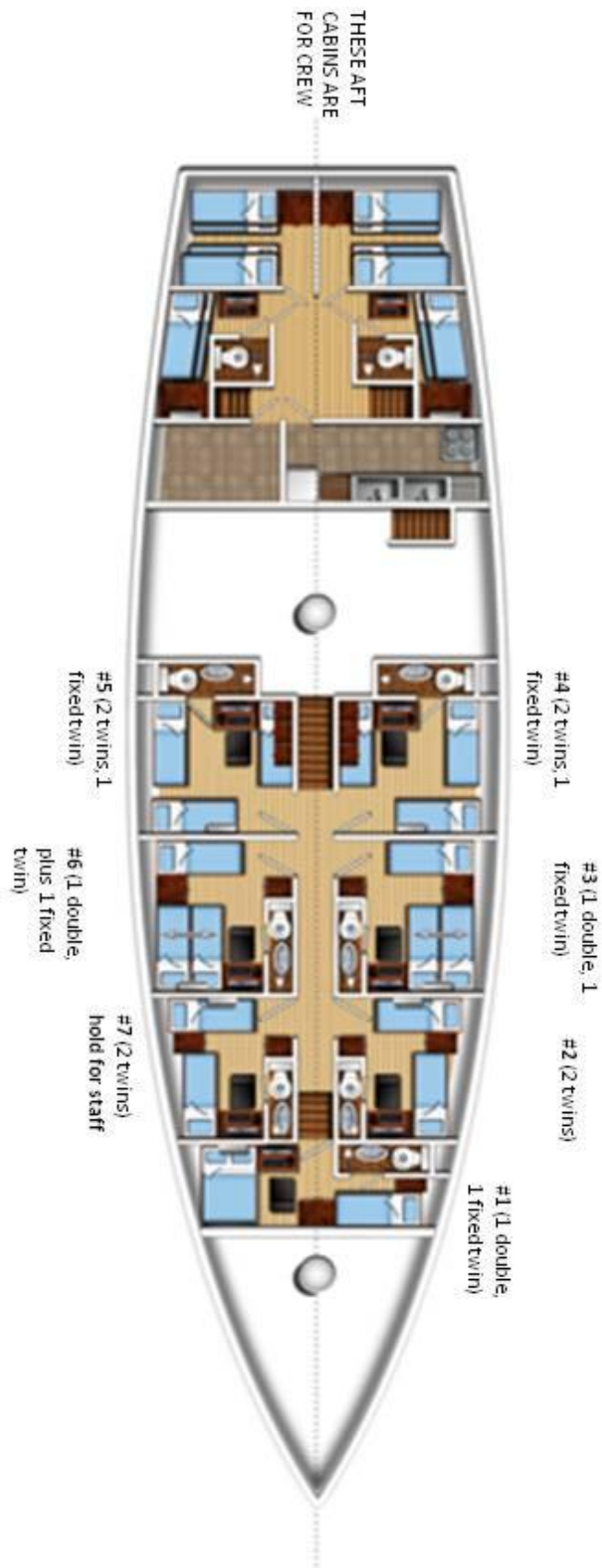
Air Transportation Asia Transpacific Journeys can book international flights in conjunction with this tour. The recommended group flight will be on Emirates Airline from New York JFK to Male, Maldives (via Dubai); airfare starts at \$1,600 (subject to change). More information will be sent to registrants.

Understandings & Responsibilities

In order to offer wildlife-oriented travel experiences to its members, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) has arranged for an independent Tour Operator(s) to organize this tour and procure carriage, accommodations, and other tour services from other parties. WWF serves only to assist in making necessary travel arrangements and in no way represents, or acts as agent for, transportation carriers, hotels, or any other suppliers of services connected with this tour. Travel and services are subject only to the terms and conditions under which such accommodations, services, and transportation are offered or provided, and WWF and its employees accept no responsibility or liability therefore. WWF and the Tour Operator(s) accept no responsibility for any damage, loss, accident, injury, delay, or other irregularity which may be caused by the defect of any vehicle or the negligence or default of any company or person engaged in carrying out or performing any of the services involved in this tour. Nor do WWF or the Tour Operator(s) accept responsibility for losses or expenses due to sickness, weather, strikes, political unrest, wars, or other such causes. Any such losses or expenses must be borne by the participant, since tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. WWF and the Tour Operator(s) reserve the right to make changes to the published itinerary whenever, in their judgment, conditions warrant, or if they deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience, or the safety of the tour. They reserve the right to withdraw without penalty any tour announced. WWF and the Tour Operator(s) also reserve the right to decline to accept any person as a member of the tour, or to require any participant to withdraw from the tour, at any time, if such action is determined by the appropriate staff member to be in the best interest of the health, safety, and general welfare of the tour group or the individual participant. Under such circumstances, no refund will be made. Baggage and personal effects are solely the responsibility of the owners at all times. Dates, schedules, program details, and costs, given in good faith, based on information available and in force in October 2011, are subject to change and revision. As a condition to acceptance of enrollment, please read, agree to, and sign the Waiver of Liability that will be sent upon registration.

Between 5 and 10 percent of your tour cost
goes to support WWF's global conservation efforts.

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