



MASTER
LIVEBOARDS

Maldives, Northern Atolls

10 nights Itinerary

- **Embarkation:** Malé Airport at 12:30 or 16:00
- **Disembarkation:** Hanimaadhoo Harbour, Haa Dhaalu Atoll @ 08:00

OR

- **Embarkation:** Hanimaadhoo Harbour, Haa Dhaalu Atoll @ 12:30
- **Disembarkation:** Hulhumale Harbour, Malé @ 08:00

Please check your booking details for embarkation and disembarkation locations for your departure dates, and refer to the [Northern Atolls Trip Information](#) document for transfer details including embarkation and disembarkation arrangements.

Marine & Port Fees:

There are no marine park or port fees in the Maldives. However, there is a Government Green Tax, which is 6 USD per person, per night and must be paid in advance as part of your liveaboard booking.

NOTE: An **entrance fee of 30 USD** per person applies if it is possible to visit [Hanifaru Bay](#) during your trip. This is a government-controlled charge, payable on board, in cash only, and is subject to change without notice.

Please note however that **inclusion of Hanifaru Bay is not guaranteed** and will depend on season, presence of mantas, and government-imposed visitor restrictions.

Minimum dive certification and experience:

Divers joining a Northern Atolls liveaboard itinerary are required to have PADI **Advanced Open Water certification**, or equivalent, with a **minimum of 50 logged dives** and should also have **experience diving in currents**.

Please note: Currents around many of the dive sites that may be included on this itinerary can be very strong and often unpredictable, making them challenging or unsuitable for novice or inexperienced divers.

We strongly recommend you have previous experience and are comfortable with drift dives, negative entries and deploying an SMB.

Guests who the crew feel have insufficient experience in certain conditions, may be denied participation in some or all dives.

It is a mandatory requirement for all divers to have insurance which covers scuba diving activities, including emergency evacuation and recompression chamber costs.

Itinerary Details

Participation in this liveboard itinerary is subject to acceptance of our Terms & Conditions as outlined here: www.masterliveboards.com/terms-conditions

The Northern Atolls itineraries take you to a selection of dive sites around the northern regions of the Maldives which includes North Malé, Baa, Raa, Shaviyani, Haa Dhaalu and Haa Alifu. There is so much to explore in this exciting diving adventure, with expected sightings of sharks, eagle rays, tuna, and much more.

Number of scheduled dives: Up to 25

Whilst we attempt to ensure the number of dives indicated above is fulfilled, this is only indicative, and not guaranteed. Several factors can hinder the vessel's ability to reach, or remain at a specific area and may therefore affect the number of dives possible.

Safety and dive briefings are conducted in English. If you or any of your group do not speak or understand English, please contact us.

Guests are responsible for their own dive profiles and for ensuring they have suitable dive insurance to cover all diving activities.

The following is an example of the day-to-day itinerary.

Day 1: Meet our crew at the embarkation airport - transfer by dhoni to Blue Voyager. Embarkation is followed by introductions, boat and safety briefings and dinner. There is no diving on embarkation day.

Days 2-9: We typically offer 3 dives a day on full diving days, scheduled as follows unless travelling distances or other circumstances dictate otherwise:

- Light Breakfast followed by a briefing & Dive 1
- Full Breakfast, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 2
- Lunch, relaxation period, briefing & Dive 3*
- Snack, relaxation period
- Dinner

*If it is possible to visit Hanifaru Bay, there will only be 2 dives offered on that day. On other days, if it is possible to offer a sunset or night dive, the normal scheduling will be slightly amended.

Day 10: For your last day of diving we usually schedule two morning dives* before the boat heads back to port after lunch.

*Guests are reminded to check their flight departure time to ensure they will have a minimum of 24 hours between their final dive and flying.

Day 11: After an early breakfast on board, disembarkation and transfer to the airport is at 08:00.

Please be aware that this itinerary will involve diving in currents, some of which can be very strong. Following is an overview of the atolls that we usually visit on Northern Atolls itineraries and an example of the dive sites that might be included, depending on conditions.

While we wish to show you the very best diving possible, a number of factors determine which sites we visit on each trip. Weather, tides, currents and marine life activity are just some of the considerations which determine the Cruise Director's and Captain's decision of which route the boat takes and which sites are selected for diving.

The safety and comfort of all on board are paramount and we always do our best to offer diving at alternate locations should we be unable to visit any of the locations listed below, for any reason. Dive sites we may visit include:

North Malé Atoll

H.P. Reef

Also known as Rainbow Reef, this is a marine protected area and a truly exceptional dive site with an abundance of soft corals and interesting features. Along the southwest section of the thila, there are numerous coral outcrops, caves and crevices; On the northwest side, a large rock formation is separated from the reef by a narrow, sandy channel. Starting from 15 metres, the side of the rock drops steeply to a depth of 24 metres where there is a large cave featuring a chimney swimthrough back up to the top of the rock.

As the thila is located in the middle of a channel, currents are to be expected and are often strong. Marine life includes sharks, eagle rays, stingrays as well as large schools of pelagic and reef fish.

Lankan Manta Point

Starting at a depth of around 7 metres, a group of large coral rocks along the outside reef of Lankanfinolhu act as a cleaning station where mantas can be consistently observed throughout the year as they stop by to be serviced by the resident blue-stripe cleaner wrasse. As the mantas awaiting their turn to be cleaned circle above, those that are done fly away down the reef scooping up mouthfuls of zooplankton in the shallows as they go.

Lankan Caves

Roughly 200 metres from Manta Point, on the southern tip of Lankanfinolhu Reef, a series of caves and overhangs ranging in depth from 5 metres down to 30 metres along a steep wall provide a lot of interesting nooks and crannies to investigate. Large table corals cover the top of the reef where schools of damselfish and sweetlips gather. Sharks, turtles, stingrays and Napoleon wrasse are just a few of the other creatures that often frequent the area.

Rasfari North Corner

At Rasfari on the western side of North Malé Atoll, we dive along the outside reef and around the corner into the channel. Depths range from 8 to 30 metres with overhangs, coral blocks and white sandy patches adding to the points of interest. In the blue and along the reef we often see white-tip, black-tip and grey reef sharks, barracuda, rays and large numbers of sweetlips. Turtles and Napoleon wrasse are also common sightings.

Baa Atoll

Encompassing 54 islands of South Maalhasmaddu and Goidhoo Atoll, Baa is best known for Hanifaru Bay where large numbers of Manta rays congregate to feed around full and new

moon phases at certain times of the year when high tides and strong currents bring nutrient-rich waters into the bay.

However, like the majority of atolls in the Maldives, Baa has many channels, reefs and thilas providing numerous dive sites offering steep drop-offs, overhangs, caves, abundant coral and fish life, sharks and eagle rays, as well as mantas. Sites we usually visit in Baa Atoll include the following:

Dhigala Haa

This beautiful thila inside the atoll is easily circumnavigated in one dive and is a favourite for shark and eagle ray sightings; often big numbers of grey reef sharks together. Once heavily fished, it is now a protected marine sanctuary; fish life is prolific and varied with blue fin jacks, fusiliers, blue-striped and humpback snapper, batfish and schools of barracuda.

Dhonfanu Thila

Dhonfanu Thila is a relatively small, oval-shaped pinnacle featuring an almost completely flat reef top with beautiful hard corals between 8 and 10 metres deep surrounded by steep, soft coral covered walls reaching down to 30 metres. Topographically, there are numerous overhangs, drop-offs, caves and canyons dotted around the entire circumference and a delightful swim-through on the east side. All along the reef, you will see schools of blue-striped snappers, fusiliers, soldierfish and butterflyfish. Look out for stingrays in the sandy areas as well as grey reef sharks and eagle rays passing by. The reef is also full of cleaner wrasse, so mantas often visit during the southwest monsoon season.

Dharavandhoo Thila

Starting as a narrow ledge which extends into the atoll from the corner of Dharavandhoo Island, this dive site comprises many features and some stunning topography offering underwater photographers the opportunity for some amazing landscape shots.

In its entirety, the reef is almost 200 metres long. The shallowest area is more or less in the centre and just 5 metres deep. Here you can find octopus, scorpionfish, stonefish, different types of moray eels and a variety of macro delights. Along the entire length on both sides, down to a depth of around 25 metres, there are coral blocks, crevices, overhangs and caves filled with sea fans and black coral bushes, sandy patches which come to life with garden eels popping out of their burrows to feed on water-borne nutrients, and gobies with their resident partner shrimps working tirelessly together to clean and guard their homes.

A cleaning station at 20 metres attracts mantas during the Southwest monsoon, usually between June and October. Regular marine life encounters include eagle rays, stingrays, groupers, barracuda and Napoleon wrasse, to name just a few.

Dhigu Thila

Another long, narrow thila, roughly 500 metres in length, Dhigu Thila resembles an underwater mountain range with distinct peaks and canyons forming a chain that is little more than 6 metres wide. The flat 'mountain' tops range in depth from 6 to 11 metres and are separated by canyons roughly 15 metres deep.

The southern side of the thila drops steeply to roughly 25 metres and is dotted with large caves filled with sea fans and whip corals where groupers, squirrelfish and numerous

smaller fish can be found hiding. The northern side descends more gradually in tiers down to the same depth and features some stunning, vertically stacked caves at the eastern end and a 15-metre wide, isolated outcrop reef at a depth of 26 metres. Apart from the topography, the thila boasts some amazing marine life; look out for octopus, flatworms, nudibranchs, scorpionfish, and black-spotted stingrays.

Hanifaru Bay (inclusion not guaranteed)

Scuba diving is not permitted in Hanifaru Bay. Snorkelling is allowed, but visitors must be escorted by an official Hanifaru Bay guide. The cost is 30 USD per person which covers entry and guide fees for approximately 45 minutes. Minimum 10 people.

Hanifaru is an uninhabited island located on the southeast side of Baa Atoll. The bay is a marine protected area, roughly the size of a football field, that is famed for the large number of manta rays that congregate in the bay at certain times of the year. This seasonal gathering is due to plankton blooms in and around the bay, a phenomenon that normally occurs between June and October, which draws the mantas in to feed and mate. When conditions are just right, there can be up to 200 manta rays feeding off the coral reefs in Hanifaru Bay.

Inclusion of Hanifaru Bay when visiting Baa Atoll is dependent on the time of year, number of mantas in the bay (or lack thereof) as well as the availability of government-licensed guides and restrictions imposed by the rangers.

Raa Atoll

Just 5km north of Baa Atoll across Hani Kandu, Raa Atoll contains a high density of reefs and thilas with caves, overhangs and drop-offs providing stunning underwater scenes of abundant marine life with colourful corals, huge numbers of reef fish and a variety of pelagics including mantas and whale sharks in the Summer months.

Alifushi Caves

Alifushi is a small, isolated island at the most northern point of the region encompassed by Raa Atoll. The ocean-facing reef wall on the southern side of the island is punctuated by amazing overhangs and caves ranging in depth from 15-30 metres. The wall is adorned with soft corals, which entice green turtles and accommodate commensal shrimps and crabs. Stingrays and eagle rays also frequent the area and of course, if you can tear your eyes away from the beautiful wall and caves, there's always the possibility of spotting sharks and other pelagics passing by in the blue.

Kottafaru Thila

Also spelled Kottefaru, this oval-shaped thila sits at a maximum depth of 30 metres reaching up to a flat reef top at 8-10 metres. Currents are often strong, which can be challenging but, the rewards are worth it. The sides of the thila drop off fairly steeply from 12 metres to the ocean floor and feature caves and overhangs on all sides providing shelter for fish, rays and nurse sharks. Amongst the corals and crevices, you will find a variety of moray eels, often being serviced by cleaner shrimp. Black coral bushes and sea anemones add colour and beauty to the site, along with large groups of golden trevally, fusiliers, butterfly fish, damsels and chromis.

Ifuru Kuda Thila

This small, circular thila is located in the channel just off the northern tip of Ifuru Island on the east side of Raa Atoll. Given its location, currents flowing around the thila can be strong making it best suited to divers with experience in similar conditions. The reef-top is 10-12 metres deep and drops to an encompassing plateau at a depth of 17-22 metres which forms the top of a wall down to the 30-metre deep sea bed. Colourful soft corals create a stunning vista with schools of bannerfish, rainbow runners, snappers and small reef fish creating a kaleidoscopic tableau. When you add the possibility of mantas, eagle rays, reef sharks, Napoleon Wrasse and stingrays into the mix, this dive site is sure to delight everyone who dives here.

Shaviyani, Haa Daahlu & Haa Alifu Atolls

These three atolls are some of the oldest of the Maldives archipelago and form a single chain of widely spaced islands surrounded by deep, clear blue water. Thilas and walls teeming with fishlife, undercut ledges with excellent corals and beautiful white sand floors add to the appeal of diving in these northernmost atolls of the Maldives.

The majority of diving is on thilas, inside the atolls.

Shaviyani Atoll (North Miladhunmadulu) - also known as Miladhunmadulu Uthuruburi, Shaviyani Atoll is the northern section of Miladhunmadulu Atoll which extends south into Noonu Atoll (South Miladhunmadulu). Shaviyani consists of 51 islands and is renowned for its natural beauty, clear turquoise waters and thriving marine life.

Haa Dhaalu Atoll (South Thiladhunmathi) - Directly above Shaviyani, Haa Dhaalu is the southern section of Thiladhunmathi Atoll and incorporates the isolated Maamakunudhoo Atoll within its boundaries. Haa Dhaalu is a beautiful and unique part of the Maldives with stunning coral reefs and diverse marine life.

Haa Alifu Atoll (North Thiladhunmathi) - also known as Thiladhunmathi Uthuruburi, Haa Alifu Atoll takes you as far north as you can get while remaining within Maldivian waters as it includes Ihavandhippolhu Atoll, the most northern natural atoll in the island nation.

Notable dive sites that we might visit, depending on conditions, include:

- Shaviyani - Maroshi Thila: an action-packed dive with a variety of sharks, abundant fish life and excellent corals.
- Shaviyani - Lola Thila: an amazing underwater hill with a good chance of sharks with a good current.
- Shaviyani - Orange Thila: Another underwater hill with some undercuts where guitar sharks can often be found hiding or outside in the sandy area. Barracuda and schools of bannerfish.
- Haa Dhaalu - Heaven and Hell: A long narrow thila, split into three separate pinnacles, featuring overhangs full of soft corals. Possible encounters include reef sharks and stingrays as well as smaller marine life; sometimes nurse sharks can be spotted sleeping at the bottom.
- Haa Dhaalu - Kulhudhufushi Thila: A large, deep underwater hill with coral blocks, table corals and a cleaning station which is periodically visited by mantas.

- Haa Alifu - Baarah Thila: Located inside a channel, this thila is connected to the channel wall. Overhangs, nicely grown with soft corals and lots of small marine life to be found.
- Haa Alifu - Island Hideaway: mantas!

Should you have any questions or concerns about the dive sites and conditions, or whether this itinerary is suitable for your experience level, please contact our reservations team dive@masterliveboards.com