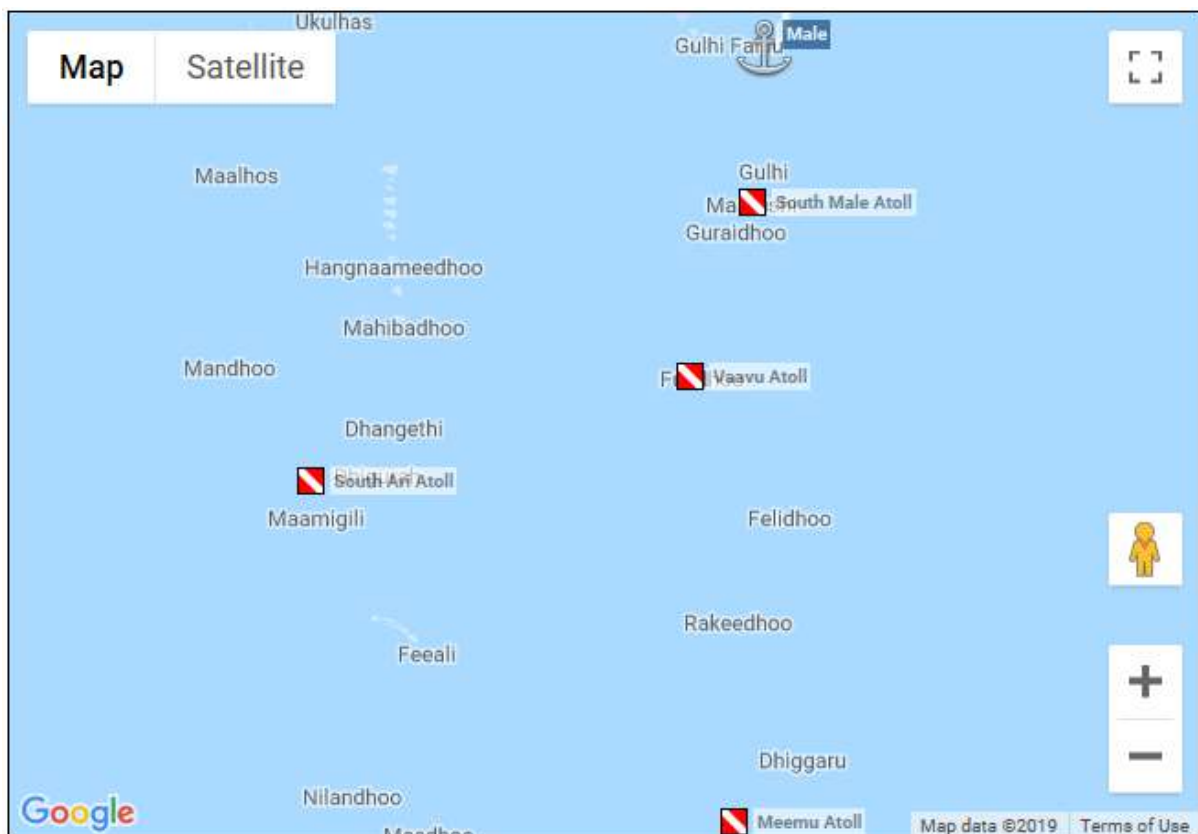


Sharktastic - visiting 4 Atolls (January - April)

7 days

This itinerary is not for beginners. Most dives will involve going to depth and currents can be strong. We recommend you have 30 logged dives to join this trip and require that you are Deep Diver/Advanced Open Water or equivalent. If you are an Open Water Diver, some dives are below 18m therefore we recommend having advanced experience or taking your PADI Advanced Open Water course on board to maximise your enjoyment from the trip. Divers may find some dives challenging and may be asked by the Cruise Director to skip dives that are not suitable for their diving experience. All diving is made from dhonis to give precise entry and exit points.



- [South Ari Atoll](#): Whale Sharks, Beautiful Pinnacles
- [South Male Atoll](#): Grey Reef Sharks, Eagle Rays, Other Pelagics, Beautiful Macro Wreck.
- [Vaavu Atoll](#): Beautiful channels with magical soft corals and pelagic delights. Action packed night dive with Nurse Sharks and others.
- [Meemu Atoll](#): Beautiful channels with pelagic action, Sailfish, Grey Reef Sharks, Eagle Rays and beautiful soft coral. Manta cleaning station.

In this period the clean ocean water flows in from the eastern side of the Maldives. That means currents running from Sumatra, Indonesia to the Maldives bring with them not just fantastic visibility up to 40m but also a variety of pelagic surprises coming to the reef for a quick feed.

The Channel dives of the eastern coast of the Maldives are the main order of the day. These *Kandus*, as they are known in the local language (Dhivehi), attract grey reef sharks, dog tooth tuna and eagle rays as standard but look out into the blue and you never know what surprises await. The outer walls and corners of the channels in Vaavu and Meemu have the added bonus of beautiful overhangs draping in the blues, yellows and pinks of the majestic soft coral.

After the adrenaline pumping channel dives of eastern Maldives we cross over to South Ari Atoll to look for the whale sharks and mantas at Maamagili and Rangali Madivaru (Dhivehi for Manta Place) among other great sites such as Kudarah Thila and Kudimaa Wreck known for its potential leaf fish and frog fish.

South Ari Atoll

Ari Atoll (also called Alif or Alufu Atoll) is one of natural atolls of the Maldives. It is one of the biggest atolls and is located in the west of the archipelago. The almost rectangular alignment spreads the islands over an area of about 89x30 kilometres. It has been divided in two sections for administrative purposes, Northern Ari Atoll and Southern Ari Atoll.

Here are some possible sites you may visit:

- **Maamigili Beyru** - 11km of reef stretches along the south of Ari Atoll, which is home to whalesharks coming up for a feed. Thought to be a 'nursery' for whalesharks, the South of Ari Atoll is a place where you can find juvenile whalesharks all year round. Normally, if we find one, we snorkel with it but sometimes we get lucky and see them on the dive too!
- **Rangali Madivaru** - Madivaru is Dhivehi (Maldivian language) for Manta Point and Rangali Madivaru doesn't disappoint! As one of the best manta cleaning stations in the Maldives during the north east monsoon (December - April), this long stretch of reef starts at 8m going down to a sandy bottom at 24m - 30m. Teeming with cleaner wrasse as well as moray eels, scorpion leaf fish and lionfish. mantas come in for a clean after having a feed; and with the reef acting as one long cleaning station from 8m to 12m, this is a great site for getting photos of mantas with good light.
- **Rahdhiga Thila** - A beautiful pinnacle just 10 minutes from Rahdhiga Island and a popular stop for the 'BBQ on the Beach' under the stars. Rahdhiga Thila is impressive from the second you swim down to 30m to look at some grey reef sharks, then moving up to the overhangs with their beautiful dripping blue, yellow and orange soft coral between 8m and 18m. Then finish the dive at 3m to 6m with some impressive table-top coral for a pleasantly relaxing safety stop.
- **Broken Rock** - Named for a large broken rock at the center of this dive site, Broken Rock is home to a beautiful array of soft and hard coral formations that attract a wide variety of reef. Where the rock is broken, there is a channel that divers can swim through, giving the dive an interesting dimension. Broken Rock varies in depth from 40 to 100 feet. Sometimes, there can be very strong currents at Broken Rock, so divers should be

cautious to avoid being thrown against the coral. Among the marine life often seen at Broken Rock, common sightings include the puffer fish, trigger fish, moray eels and napoleon wrasse.

- **Kudarah Thila** - Declared a "Protected Marine Area" by the Maldivian government, Kudarah Thila is a popular dive site which enjoys many incoming currents. Coral reef formations at Kudarah Thila are bright and colorful, including a variety of soft and hard corals. Thila means "Pinnacle" in Dhivehi, and at Kudarah Thila there are actually four pinnacles, which can be all visited in one dive. A swim-through at the south-east corner of the dive site makes this a particularly popular dive, as does the rich variety of marine life, which typically includes trumpet fish, snapper, gobies, dartfish, oriental sweetlips and groupers. A little further away from the reef, divers are likely to see gray reef sharks, napoleon fish and sea turtles.
- **Pannettone (Kalhahandi Kandu)** - Kalhahandi Kandu has earned the nickname Pannettone from the many Italian divers who believe it resembles the traditional Italian fruitcake. It is an attractive dive site, recommended mainly for advanced scuba divers, except for when the currents are not strong. There are some spectacular coral formations here, featuring a variety of soft and hard coral species, which attract a wide selection of fish including angelfish, basslets, butterfly fish, scorpion fish, trigger fish and puffer fish. The corals here are in good condition and weather conditions at Pannettone mean the dive site can be explored year-round.

South Male Atoll

The atoll of South Male is separated from North Male by the Vaadhoo Kandu channel. Channel diving is a major feature of diving in South Male. These channels, whilst currents can be challenging, do bring with it an abundance of nutrients to feed and attract all types of marine life. Here are some possible sites you may visit:

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- **Kandooma Thila** - A magnificent long thin pinnacle in the middle of a channel between Cocoa Corner and Kandooma Island Resort, this is one of the few channels in the Maldives where it doesn't matter which way the current is going - it will be a spectacular dive! Grey reef sharks and eagle rays are likely companions here. Due to its position in the channel, this is a dive site for advanced divers who understand the current. Magnificent overhangs with draping colourful soft coral and shark cleaning stations await those who dive this challenging but rewarding dive site.
- **Kuda Giri Wreck** - This beautiful 30m long wreck lies along the side of a small pinnacle in South Male Atoll, sloping from 18m down to 33m at the stern. A great dive for macro lovers with the wreck having leaf fish, false-cheeked pipefish and other interesting little creatures to entertain. Explore the wreck and then work your way over to the shallow pinnacle that has an interesting overhang and little swim-throughs as well as a good coral garden at 5m where you can finish your safety stop.
- **Cocoa Corner (Cocoa Thila)** - Cocoa Corner is a dive site that can be explored in several different ways and with the right current and conditions, it's is the best shark show around Male Atoll. Many dive guides consider crossing from Cocoa Corner to Kandooma Thila. With the right current, divers begin the dive from Cocoa Corner and while maintaining a depth of 25 to 29 metres, they swim across the current while parallel to the edge at 40 metres. This gives a natural reference that divers are maintaining the correct position while crossing to the Thila and divers are not taken too far inside the channel. The Thila lies in the middle of the channel about 15 metres from the channel edge. Here, divers will see heaps of Grey Reef Sharks from big mother sharks to newborn babies patrolling the edge of the channel together. Eagle Rays and schooling Jack Fish

are also common at the beginning of the Thila. By the time divers reach the Thila, their bottom time should be running out and the best thing to do is to swim to the top of the Thila and continue diving in shallower waters. A safety balloon is a must at Cocoa Corner and divers should be prepared to make an open water safety stop.

- **Guraidhoo Kandhu South** is sometimes also known as Guraidhoo Corner. Currents at Guraidhoo Kandhu are strong, making this a dive site appropriate only for advanced, experienced scuba divers. Gray reef sharks are common visitors at Guraidhoo Kandhu when the currents are incoming, along with several pelagic species and eagle rays. Divers should be very cautious at this dive site, as the currents can pull you away from the reef and there is often underwater turbulence.

Vaavu Atoll (Felidhoo Atoll)

Vaavu (or Felidhoo) Atoll is an undeveloped paradise comprised of 19 beautiful isles and the natural atolls of Felidhoo Atoll and the Vattaru Reef. It is the smallest and among the least commercialised atolls in the Maldives. The pristine, warm waters here are teeming with fish and larger marine life providing superb diving for both beginners and advanced divers.

Here are some possible sites you may visit:

- **Fotteyo Kandhu** is one of Maldives' signature dive sites and is considered, by some, to be one of the best dive sites in the Maldives. This dive site is at its best between January to April, a time when the currents predominantly come into the atolls from the east and brings a copious diversity of fish life looking to feast. This narrow channel entrance is covered in colourful soft corals leading to an overhanging drop-off with more beautiful soft corals draping in the blue to finally reach the pinnacle in the middle of the channel. Like most channel dives in the Maldives, this formation allows for an extended dive time for you to explore the swim-throughs, small caves and gaze out into the blue for eagle rays, grey reef sharks, white tip reef sharks, tuna, barracuda and the occasional hammerhead.
- **Bodu Miyaru Kandhu**, or 'Big Shark Channel', is another top dive site and certainly lives up to its name. Dropping in at the south eastern corner you keep the reef on your left until you reach the drop off at the channel entrance which is approximately 30 metres deep. This site features small caves and numerous overhangs, and there is a sloping section on the left side of the channel covered in hard coral and some soft coral.

Meemu Atoll

Enchanting channels with pelagic action, sailfish, grey reef sharks, eagle rays and beautiful soft coral. Manta cleaning station.

Here are some possible sites you may visit:

- **Muli Corner** is one of the top dive sites in the Maldives and is always good for a surprise! The channel corner slopes down from about 16m to the channel bottom at about 35m. There are small overhangs with soft corals. Here look out for leaf fish and ribbon eels. Once on the corner divers hook up at a depth at 26-28m and just enjoy the show. Tuna, jacks, white tip sharks and grey reef sharks come in quite close. Mantas, whale shark, bull shark and sailfish have been seen here as well. With the right current you will be in big fish country. Between April and October Muli Corner is also an excellent active manta cleaning station.

- **Vanhuravalhi Kandu** is a very narrow channel with its channel edge at about 28m and can be easily crossed if the current runs the right direction. Big swarms of big fish can be seen during the cross - big eye trevallies, barracudas, huge tunas and jacks, but the highlight is definitely groups of grey reef sharks. On your way to the other side you will pass small overhangs staffed with yellow soft corals. Finishing the dive in the shallow area at the channel corner with blue strip snapper, batfish and turtles.
- **Kurali Kandu** is a sandy channel with a maximum depth of 12-16m. Here you can find some smaller coral blocks, which appear to be cleaning stations for manta and other rays coming in for some cleaning.
- **Raadbandhihuraa Kandu**, a channel in the west of the atoll with an incoming current you will be swimming in fish soup with shoals of fusiliers, surgeon fish and snappers to name but a few. The reef slopes downwards in terraces with very healthy coral life mimicking a Japanese garden! Don't forget to glance out to the blue every once in a while, to check for sharks, tunas and jacks.