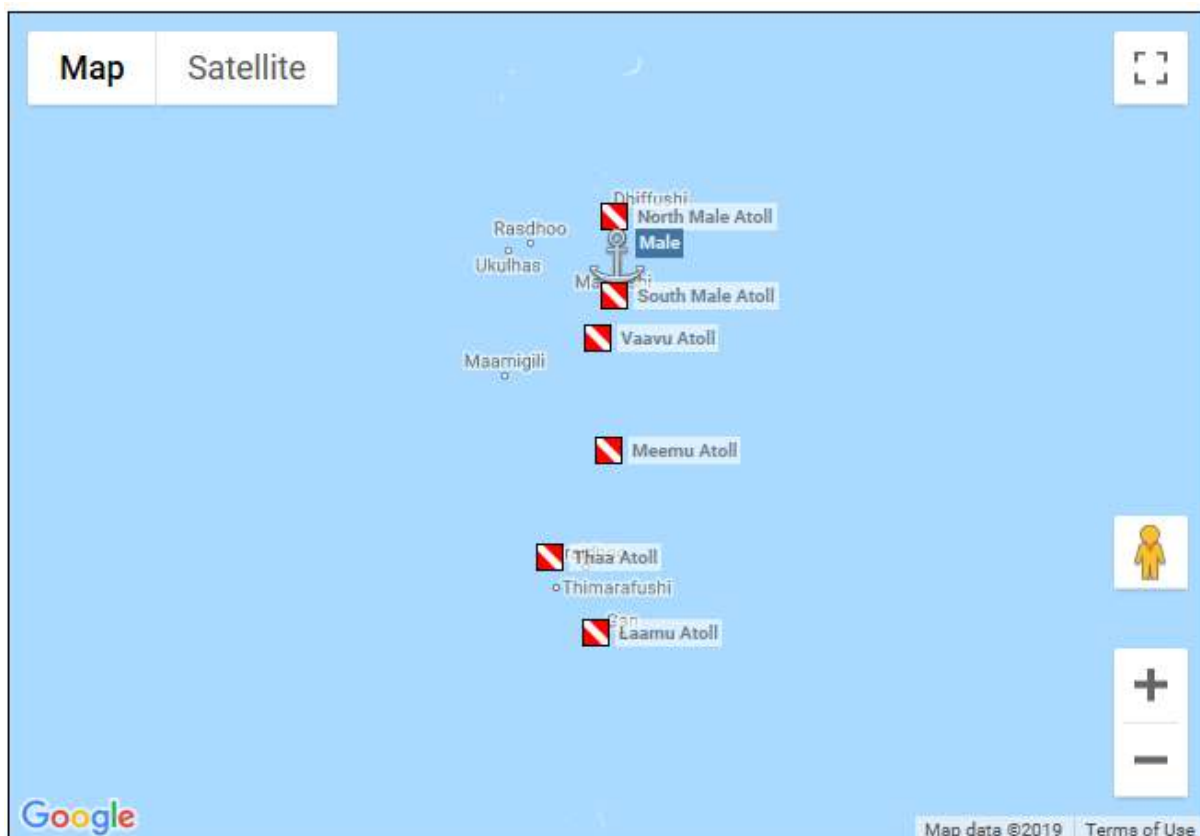


South Central Atolls (January to March)

7 day trips - Male to Laamu / Laamu to Male

Most dives will involve going to depth and diving in channels with strong currents, which can be challenging, therefore this itinerary is not for inexperienced divers. We recommend you have 100 logged dives to join this trip and require that you are Deep Diver/Advanced Open Water or equivalent. 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.

Please note: Due to weather and diving conditions, it's not always possible to visit each Atoll. Your Cruise Director will decide the best ones to visit at the time of diving.



- [North Male Atoll](#) (Check Dive): Beautiful Pinnacles & House Reefs.
- [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](#): Enchanting channels with pelagic action, Sailfish, Grey reef sharks, Eagle rays and beautiful soft coral. Manta cleaning station.
- [Thaa Atoll](#): Hammerhead sharks, Whale sharks at night.
- [Laamu Atoll](#): Beautiful fish filled channels with great shark encounters.

Looking for action? Speedy drift dives, mantas, sharks and diving several atolls? Our guides and crew make it their business to make sure you see mantas and sharks as well as potential magical creatures coming out from the depths of the blue.

January to March is the time to join us as this is when the current in the Kandus is largely incoming from the east. There's a good variety of diving from thrilling channel dives to more relaxed diving inside the atolls on Thilas or Giris.

The best thing? There are few other boats as we visit atolls that have very few resorts and lots of uninhabited islands so liveaboard competition is low.

Hammerheads are often found in Thaa as well as whale sharks who visit our boat at night attracted by the krill, which, in turn, are attracted by the lights. When the currents are running well, the channel dives here are outstanding. Abundant with schooling snappers, jacks, barracuda, white tips and greys, grouper, Napoleon wrasse, turtles, eagle rays and more.

You will either join your liveaboard in Male or Laamu (Kadhdhoo), and then it's off on our adventure.

This itinerary has a lot of drift diving so it's best suited to more advanced divers. With visibility being really good in the southern atolls, this is ideal for photographers and videographers looking for larger Pelagic action.

Fancy an extended trip? South Central matches up perfectly with Deep South Southern Sharks. Stay on board for a second trip and join us in the southern most atolls of the Maldives for even more exciting channels and adventures with pelagics from the blue.

North Male Atoll

North Male Atoll is one of the most developed atolls in terms of hotel and resort development. There are at least 20 resort islands operating in the North Male Atoll. It is also home to some excellent diving spots.

Here are some possible sites you may visit:

- **Lankan Manta Point** - Lying along the channel reef of Lankanfushi (now Paradise Island Resort), this large block of coral is home to hundreds of cleaner wrasse. During the south west monsoon (May to November) the current runs from west to east, so the mantas feed on the outside of the eastern side of the Atolls. After they have had a feed, they

come into cleaning stations such as Lankan Manta Point and get cleaned by the cleaner wrasse; a perfect chance for divers to get up close and personal with these majestic mantas.

- **Banana Reef** was the first dive site to be discovered in the Maldives continues to be one of the most popular. The dive, which ranges in depth from 5 to 30 meters, has several interesting characteristics including a pinnacle and some overhangs. Coral formations here are prolific and colorful, attracting an extensive variety of fish, including squirrelfish, bannerfish and oriental sweetlips. Currents can be strong at times around the reef, with occasional turbulence occurring around the overhangs. As such, the use of a surface balloon is recommended.
- **Kuda Haa** is a dramatic pinnacle, or thila, dive, which is widely considered one of the highlights of diving in the Maldives. Diving at Kuda Haa is at its best when the currents are not strong, when it is easy to navigate between the two parts of the pinnacle. Marine life to be expected at Kuda Haa is diverse and plentiful, including many macro species, including nudibranchs, flatworms, leaf fish and frogfish.

South Male Atoll

The atoll of South Male is separated from North Male by the Vaadhoo Kanduu 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:

Here are some possible sites you may visit:

- **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 Kandu South** is sometimes also known as Guraidhoo Corner. Currents at Guraidhoo Kandu are strong, making this a dive site appropriate only for advanced, experienced scuba divers. Gray reef sharks are common visitors at Guraidhoo Kandu 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 Kandu** 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 Kandu**, 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.

Thaa Atoll

Thaa Atoll (also known as Kolhumadulu) is among the least visited dive destinations in the Maldives. This round atoll has a combined landmass close to 9 km, with no single island larger than a square kilometre. The mesmerizingly beautiful series of 66 tiny islands that make up the atoll are surrounded by spectacularly clear water with underwater wonders and beauty yet to be discovered. Some dives have strong currents, but this brings in the pelagic such as hammerheads, whale sharks and dolphins especially at night. Expect large reefs, coral gardens, steep walls and overhangs plus action packed channels. Advanced divers can explore deep, steep walls that are decorated with coral.

Here are some possible sites you may visit:

- **Dhiyamigili Corner** is most probably the site with the highest chance of spotting schooling hammerhead sharks in the Maldives. Wake up early, head out into the blue and try your luck at spotting these majestic sharks.
- **Dhigu Giri** is not a dive site, yet a great place to spot whale sharks coming up behind the boat at night. The crew set out the big spot light, which attracts the krill, which in-turn attracts the whale sharks that come in for a midnight feed.

Laamu Atoll

Laamu Atoll (also known as Haddhunmathi Atoll) is an oval shaped southern atoll. It measures 48 km in length and 35 km in width and has some of the top dive sites in the world such as Guraidhoo and Gan; this Maldives Atoll is situated 32 km south east of Kolhumadulu Atoll and 95 km north of Huvadhu Atoll. Laamu Atoll boasts numerous pristine dive sites with many different features like caves, steep drop offs, swim-throughs, not to mention the abundance of marine life and beautiful topography. Expect beautiful fish-filled channels with great shark encounters.

Here are some possible sites you may visit:

- **Fushi Kandu** has a fantastic channel with a relatively shallow entrance at 15m allowing for an extended channel dive, which permits crossing the channel to maximise the sightings. This dive site is commonly described as Fish Soup, and it rarely disappoints with its resident grey reef sharks, barracuda, big eye jacks, and abundant fish life.
- **Laamu Manta Point**; simply relax and watch these graceful beasts do a fly-by over your head to join the queue of Manta each waiting their turn for a clean-up from cleaner wrasse, resident to an active, nearby coral block.

