



## Sustainable Tourism in the Maldives



**>1,192**  
*Coral islands*



**>2000**  
*Species of  
marine life*

Welcome to the Sunny Side of Life, your dream destination. The islands of the Maldives, in the heart of the Indian Ocean, form a double chain of 26 atolls comprising 1,192 gorgeous coral islands surrounded by mesmerising reefs.



Maldivian oceans are home to over 2000 diverse species of marine life ranging from healthy populations of dolphins, sea turtles, manta rays and whale sharks. The Maldives has an incredibly delicate environment. Coral reefs are the foundation of the islands, so it's no secret that as the world's lowest-lying country, the islands and atolls that make up the Maldives are under threat from rising sea levels. About five per cent of the Earth's reefs are found in the Maldives. These reefs are famous worldwide for their vibrant displays of colour and diversity of marine life.

The Maldives has its own unique culture, crafts, and traditions, shaped by the island environment and the seas that surround us.



# Maldives-Leading Climate Talks Through Government Sustainability Initiatives



A global leader in advocating against the adverse effects of the climate crisis, the Maldives has been vocal in climate crisis activism in the international arena. The Maldivian government has pledged to protect at least one reef, one mangrove and one uninhabited island from each atoll.

In 2019, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, announced a comprehensive phase-out of single-use plastic items in the Maldives.

The most polluting single-use plastic items, such as small water bottles and single-use plastic bags, were phased out by 2023. In order to tackle the problem, the Government used a 'drawdown' model for

reducing plastic waste, implementing a series of smart policies aimed at eradicating the most problematic plastics from the country. The Maldives government utilises policy interventions ranging from outright bans and taxes to revised industry standards and guidelines.

The Maldives has also addressed the urgency of the climate crisis at Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP) throughout the past years, and has highlighted the nation's sustainable development plans while advocating the nation's position on global climate concerns. The Maldives is also a leader in advocating for climate resilience funding for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the global arena.



# Journey Towards a Sustainable Net-Zero



The Maldives is working to reduce its carbon emissions and become more environmentally sustainable. As part of this effort, the country has set a goal of reducing emissions by 26% by 2030, with the aim of reaching net-zero emissions by 2030 if possible depending on the international support received. Over 42.6 megawatts worth Solar PV Systems were installed over the last 5 years, saving MVR 320 million. To help protect the Maldives from the effects of the climate crisis, the country is also focused on preparing for extreme weather events and working with other island communities. All of these efforts are part of the Maldives' plan to become more resilient and better able to withstand the impacts of a changing climate.



# Maldives Sustainability Initiatives At A Glance

- Two areas in the Maldives are Ecologically and Biologically Significant Marine Areas
- All species of sea turtles found in the Maldives and 39 species of corals have been assessed under Maldives Red List of Threatened Species
- Maldives is a strong advocate for the 30 by 30 global target under the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework. As such we are a member of the Global Ocean Alliance and the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People
- Noo Raajje is an initiative from the Government of the Maldives in partnership with the Blue Prosperity Coalition, working closely with local and international organisations around the globe to accomplish the complex task of creating effective ocean protection strategies and building sustainable blue economies.
- The Nekton Maldives Mission, is the first systematic survey and sampling of the Maldives from the surface to 1000 metre depths. In partnership with the Government of Maldives, the Mission aims to help create extensive new marine protected areas and ensure the ocean continues to protect and provide for the Maldivian people.
- Blue Economy (Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023) defines action plans for sustainable fisheries, integrated eco-tourism, strengthening agricultural supply chains, and more.
- 130 areas protected by the end of this year (2023), of which 82 areas were protected over the past 5 years.
- The Maldives has 03 UNESCO Biosphere Reserves. Fuvahmulah UNESCO Biosphere Reserve is approximately 1300 hectares with some of the most diverse seascapes and marine life found in the Maldives. The Addu Atoll Biosphere Reserve is approximately 13000 hectares, and the majority of this biosphere reserve is marine ecosystems with highly diverse reef ecosystems. The other UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the Maldives is Baa Atoll, home to the world-famous Hanifaru bay.
- Protected birds or marine living species in the Maldives include; lobsters, tritons, napoleon wrasses, dolphins, whale sharks, all types of sharks, black corals, and all species of sea and land turtles.
- Mission Blue defines Hope Spots as exceptional locations that are scientifically identified as critical to the health of the ocean.
- Green Tax is payable by tourists who stay in tourist resorts, hotels, tourist vessels and guest houses. The tax revenue collected is used for conservation efforts.
- Any type of waste, oil, poisonous gases or any substances that may have harmful effects on the environment may not be disposed of within the territory of the Maldives. It is also prohibited to burn waste generated from the operation of the resort in the open areas of the resort. Incinerators shall be used to dispose of such waste.



# Economic Development & Sustainability

Tourism and Fisheries are the two biggest contributors to the national GDP in the Maldives. As such, strict guidelines are in place to ensure that all economic development activities, especially those relevant to these two industries, are carried forward in the most sustainable manner, for the benefit of the environment, the economy, and ultimately, the people. These include guidelines against harmful economic activities such as relocating flora and fauna from tourism development sites, and running complete EIA analyses prior to conducting any work that may have an adverse impact on the surrounding environment, ecosystems, and socioeconomic development of the region.

All luxury one-island-one-resorts, boutique hotels, chic island guesthouses, and liveaboards in the Maldives have all taken up the mantle to embrace sustainable tourism. Be it through coral conservation programmes, erosion prevention, or simply raising awareness among visitors, we are proud that all our tourist facilities and institutions have joined together and answered the call to conserve the environment and the Maldivian way of life.

Maldivian fishing practices are the most sustainable in the world, and have been so for many generations. Going fishing in the Maldives is one activity you can do without feeling any guilt.

The Maldives is a world leader in pole-and-line tuna fishing; the act of fishing in the Maldives is strictly restricted to one-by-one fishing as the most sustainable and environmentally sound method. Fisherfolk in the Maldives often work as families, with designated members at home to clean, smoke, and cook the catch in preparation for sale or consumption.

Organic, fresh, and clearly ethically-sourced, Maldivian tuna and tuna products are famous world over for the best reasons.

The Maldivian government envisions the Maldives as a benchmark for sustainable tourist development, aiming to position tourism as an economically profitable industry that coexists in harmony with its natural environment, cultural resources, and the value of its people.



# MMPRC - Promoting Sustainable Initiatives



The Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC / Visit Maldives) is taking bold steps to encourage, support, and promote sustainable initiatives and sustainable tourism. Visit Maldives publishes guides on topics such as how to have safe and sustainable encounters with marine animals, and also

promotes unseen ecosystems of the Maldives such as wetlands and mangrove forests. Visit Maldives is taking this one step forward by incorporating sustainability messaging in all marketing campaigns and activities such as fairs, roadshows, social media platforms, and more.

# Take Part in the Maldives' Sustainability Initiatives

Here are some activities you can participate in during your stay in the Maldives, to give back to nature.

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## Adopt a Coral Frame

Several resorts allow visitors to interact with Marine Biologists and help to conserve the corals by adopting a frame to actively participate in the conservation project. It contributes to the aim to preserve the coral reefs and encourage responsible tourism.

Visitors may adopt a frame and watch their corals take shape over months. The frames are designed and often created on nearby islands, providing employment and skills development to the local populace and further improving the sustainable nature of the eco-conservation project.

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Sheraton Maldives

## Visit A Marine Turtle Rescue Centre

Visit a veterinarian-led turtle rescue centre. These centres and organisations discard fishing nets- known as ghost nets- from the ocean; rescue and rehabilitate sea turtles injured by these nets; reuse and reduce marine debris; and educate the world about the dangers of ghost nets and the perilous situation of sea turtles.

Visitors are often more than welcome to visit the rescue centres to volunteer, visit the patient, or simply learn about the dangers of ghost nets to marine creatures.



Sixth Sense Laamu



## Teach the Little Ones About Sustainability

There are many centres that offer 'little' visitors a range of educational activities related to the ocean environment. Many resorts have kids' clubs that engage children in topics related to sustainability and conservation awareness, incorporating play and stories into the learning experience to foster respect for the environment. Children are encouraged to be creative and immerse themselves in the local culture and wildlife through activities such as craft classes using recycled materials, visits to local islands, and lessons on coral conservation and propagation.

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## Experience Marine Protected Areas & Protected Species by Following Guidelines & Procedures

Experience the beauty and diversity of marine protected areas and protected species in the Maldives by following guidelines and procedures. These guidelines and procedures are put in place to ensure the conservation and preservation of these unique and fragile ecosystems and the species that call them home. By following these guidelines, you can have a safe and responsible experience while also contributing to the protection of these important areas and creatures. Some of the guidelines you may be asked to follow include respecting boundaries and not disturbing marine life or habitats.

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## Health, Wellness, and Sustainability



Crossroads Maldives



Fushifaru Fushifaru Maldives

The Maldives offers a range of activities and practices to nourish the body and mind and reconnect with the natural environment. From yoga and meditation to spa treatments using local, natural ingredients, the Maldives caters to those seeking relaxation and rejuvenation. We promote both health and wellness and sustainability, providing a harmonious balance for travellers looking to relax and recharge while also making a positive impact on the environment. Several establishments in the Maldives also use indigenous flora, herbs, and medicine in spa treatments - providing guests with an authentic and culturally-rooted wellness experience.

## An Environmentally-Conscious Culture

The local culture, traditions, and heritage of the Maldives are deeply rooted in respect and reverence for the natural environment. Life in the Maldives was, in almost every single way, set at a level of sustainability that we are now trying to revive. The Maldivian way of life had always been closely tied to the sea, with a reliance on the big blue for food, transportation, and trade. As a result, there is a strong cultural emphasis on protecting and preserving the environment and its resources.

Maldives is always looking to empower our tourism industry with sustainable practices, and offer our visitors a variety of options to give back to nature and the environment.

We are a world leader in advocating for climate resilience, and at the forefront of conducting any and all activities that we can to protect the natural environment on which we depend on for our livelihoods.

Conservation of the natural ecosystems and its inhabitants lie at the heart of our sustainable tourism practices. For the conscious traveller especially, the Maldives is a veritable paradise of untouched natural habitats filled with a variety of unique wildlife, flora, and fauna.



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