

MALDIVES

TOURISM BULLETIN

Volume: 04
April 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

News and events from industry

CONVERSATIONS

Prominent personalities, promising faces

UPDATES

Trends, market updates
& tourist facilities





GOLDEN YEAR *
OF TOURISM 2022

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Maldivian Cuisine

*Safe Haven surrounded by
pristine blue waters*

HIGHLIGHTS FROM VISIT MALDIVES

By: Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation



*Fly from the Middle East to the
Maldives via Emirates, Etihad Airways,
Qatar Airways and Fly Dubai.*

REDISCOVER
Maldives *...the sunny side of life.*

Maldives
...the sunny side of life.

March was an incredibly successful and productive year for Maldives and the team at Visit Maldives. We started the month off with a celebration of the 11th anniversary of MMPRC, commenting upon the struggles of 2020, and providing a brief on the way forward.

Visit Maldives conducted three familiarization trips during March

Visit Maldives took part in offline promotional activities in India and Russia. These activities are the first offline activities initiated since border reopening and easing of travel restrictions.

Familiarization Trip

Visit Maldives invited Croatian celebrity cellist Stjepan Hauser to collaborate on a video shoot to showcase the natural beauty of the destination. Stjepan Hauser, was a member of 2CELLOS and has been trained in classical music and is well known for his classical take on various popular songs. Hosted by Fushifaru Maldives from 23rd February to 3rd March, the celebrity will be posting stories on his social media



which has a combined reach of over 10 million people, showcasing the safety and serenity offered in the resort and the destination.

The celebrity shared content on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Youtube and Instagram. Stories posted on his official Instagram account will be reached to his follower audience of 2.4 million people. Through the video shoot planned to take place in Fushifaru Maldives, the video will be uploaded to his YouTube channel which has over 1.6 million subscribers and a combined view of over 413 million.

Several activities targeting the Balkan Region are currently in the pipeline, including a roadshow in Central and Eastern Europe focused to increase the destination awareness and exposure in this market. Romania is ranked among the top five in terms of tourist arrivals to the Maldives as per the latest statistics from February 2021.

Furthermore, Visit Maldives hosted Jurgen Wenzel, a journalist from the German market from 7th to 13th March 2021. This is the first familiarization trip carried out for this market in 2021 and the purpose is to promote the destination as a safe heaven for travelers, highlighting the unique geographical formation of Maldives and the stringent safety measures in place. This serves to entice travelers to visit the destination and circulate updated travel information to a wide audience.

The major coverage avenues for the trip includes Berliner Zeitung, one of the most read newspapers in Germany, and Maitre Magazine, a quarterly publication that focuses on lifestyle, culinary art and wellness. Additionally, there is a feature in the form of an extended written story and short video clip on Gourmino Express, an online blog dedicated to culinary delights. Overall, these circulations are expected to have a combined reach of 350,000.

Additionally, In the efforts to maintain destination presence and promote the Maldives in the Russian market, Visit Maldives invited a renowned



photographer representing National Geographic Russia to showcase the destination through a physical photo exhibition to be held in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia during the summer.

The exhibition will promote the Maldives as a safe haven for travelers and highlight the unique geographical formation of Maldives along with a variety of activities and cultural elements through the lens of photographer Ivan Dementievsky.. The photographer will travel within the Maldives from 18th March until 29th March 2021.

Visit Maldives aims to promote and highlight the culture, traditions, heritage and the local island experience of Maldives. Several initiatives are underway to market the destination in Russia. In this regard, high impact campaigns on both offline and online platforms are in the pipeline for the market with several more collaborations with media and key stakeholders in the market.

Promotional Activities

Offline Activities in Russia

Visit Maldives took part in ITB Berlin, one of the leading travel and trade shows in the world from 09th to 12th March 2021. The event is held virtually for the first time ever this year, due to the ongoing covid-19 situation.

The four-day event presented the opportunity to network with stakeholders from all over the world and manage appointments on the platform with participants and establish new business connections through B2B meetings. It also provided a platform to maintain and strengthen destination presence and promote the Maldives as a safe haven to travel during this challenging period. A total of 15 companies and 27 participants are participating alongside the destination in this event

To further enhance the visibility of the destination, banners on the ITB Berlin website and social media posts from the official ITB Berlin accounts promoted the participation of the Maldives one week prior to the event. An article on Maldives as an ideal destination for safe travels was shared on the official ITB Berlin e-news website with the destination also listed amongst the official sponsors & partners.

Furthermore, Visit Maldives took part in Moscow International Travel Trade Show (MITT), the first physical fair since reopening with the industry partners to promote the destination. MITT was held in Moscow, Russia from 16th to 18th March 2021 is the place where destinations and travel trade professionals from all over the world meet travel agents and tour operators from Russia and CIS.



23 industry participants from 12 companies took part in the fair along with the Visit Maldives team. The purpose of taking part in this three-day fair is to maintain and strengthen the destination presence in the Russian market and establish Maldives as the top

of the mind destination for Russian travelers. Russian market has been one of the top performing markets since the reopening of Maldives border to international travelers on July 15th, 2020.

Visit Maldives aims to achieve targeted growth for various tourism products and enable a platform for industry partners to present their products to the market. Visit Maldives and industry partners presented the products and the unique experiences available in the Maldives at the dedicated Maldives stand A2041 in Pavilion 1.4 in a 148.6 sqm space.

MITT provided the opportunity to meet and update the travel trade in Russia with the latest information on Maldives, including but not limited to the stringent health and safety measures put in place to combat the spread of COVID-19. In addition, the fair offered the opportunity to gain new partners and clients among visitors representing the travel trade and maintain present relationships.

Furthermore, Maldives won the titles of the “Best Island Presentation” and “Bright Exhibiting Award” during the fair. The awards were given for the attractive presentation of the Maldives stand and overall effort in the promotion of the destination at the Fair respectively. During the ceremony, awards were given for both long-standing exhibitors and newcomers for outstanding preparation for the show, unusual and eye-catching stands, innovative projects and the best destinations.

Coinciding with MITT, Visit Maldives hosted roadshows in four Russian cities from 21-26 March. The roadshows were held in Moscow, Kazan, Saint Petersburg & Ekaterinburg. Along with Visit Maldives, 20 companies with 34 participants took part in the roadshow to further strengthen the destination presence and relationship with trade partners.

Several initiatives are underway to market the destination in Russia. High impact campaigns such as media familiarization trips have been conducted earlier this year, with more planned for the upcoming months. In addition, Visit Maldives is conducting a global campaign targeting Russia in collaboration with Expedia. The collaboration with Expedia is one of the many high-impact global campaigns planned for the year. Visit Maldives is currently carrying an educational and training program targeted to the Russian travel trade with Association of Tour Operators in Russia (ATOR).

Offline Activities in India

Lastly, the very first offline events in India following the border closures and travel restrictions were kicked off on the 22nd March with a high level press conference followed by a Roadshow in Delhi hosted by

VisitMaldives. Maldives will also be showcased at the South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE) in Delhi from 24-26th March. The Maldivian delegation for the events in India was led by Hon. Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Tourism; Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed, Managing Director of Visit Maldives and Dr. Hussain Niyaz, High Commissioner of Maldives to India.

The Press Conference titled 'Maldives: Media Meet' was addressed by high level speakers from Maldives, Hon. Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Tourism; Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed, Managing Director of Visit Maldives and Dr. Hussain Niyaz, High Commissioner of Maldives to India. Latest updates from the Maldives and the tourism industry were shared at the press conference attended by key travel trade and mainstream media of India and Delhi region.

Key topics of interest were addressed from the angles of tourism and foreign policy and marketing. These included the success story of the Maldives tourism during the pandemic, India becoming the top source market to Maldives and the marketing plan for India as well as the travel bubble between India and Maldives. Furthermore, updates on the vaccination programme and important information and updates for travellers were shared.

Prior to the press conference and roadshow, the Managing Director of Visit Maldives and the Visit Maldives team attended meetings with Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), GoAir Airlines and Yatra to discuss collaborative efforts to promote Maldives in the Indian market. In addition, a meeting was conducted with Thomas Cook in which the company remarked upon the success of the strategy during the pandemic and future marketing plans.

The Press Conference was shortly followed by the Maldives Roadshow 'Connect with Maldives, Your Safe Haven' targeting top travel trade of India. The roadshow created the opportunity for the 11 companies from the Maldives tourism industry who participated at the event to connect with over 100 key travel trade partners from the Indian market to generate new business leads and engage in one-on-one networking opportunities. From the overall destination perspective, a presentation was given highlighting destination information, key updates and travel information.

The main marketing message communicated to the travel trade was that Maldives is one of the safest destinations to travel during this time due to the unique geographic isolation of the islands, the one island one resort together with the stringent health and safety protocols in place. The event held at the Shangri-La Hotel in Delhi concluded with dinner and a raffle draw. Raffle prizes were sponsored by Baglioni Resort Maldives and Adaaran Club Rannalhi.



Maldives will take part in the South Asian Travel and Tourism Exchange (SATTE) held in Delhi, India from 24th to 26th March 2021. SATTE is one of the leading B2B travel exchange shows held in India. A total of 22 participants from 13 companies will take part along with Visit Maldives. During the 3 days of SATTE, participants will have the opportunity to showcase their products, network with various key industry stakeholders, generate new business leads and engage in B2B sessions.

The event will help further develop and strengthen the presence of the Maldives in the Indian market. The fair is the first event since the pandemic in which the tourism community will physically gather, marking the event as a highly important occasion.

The three-day event is expected to attract a large number of visitors from India. Based on figures from 2019 the fair had over 1,000 participants, representation from 50 different countries, 28 Indian states and 50 cities from across India. The Maldives stand will be showcased at a 72 square meter stand designed to represent the beauty and the natural environment of the Maldives.

In addition, an online quiz was conducted on information regarding the Maldives and visitors will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the beauty of the Maldives through touchless 360° virtual images and videos. To increase visibility of Maldives at the fair, an outdoor banner in a prime location at the entrance of the fair will showcase the beauty of the Maldives throughout the event.

March was a very productive and successful year for the Maldivian tourism industry. With record breaking numbers recorded during February and the number of tourist arrivals steadily increasing, there is great hope for a complete revival of the tourism industry and witnessing pre-pandemic visitor arrival numbers. Visit Maldives conducted the first offline promotional activities in Russia and India since border closures and travel restrictions. High profile familiarization trips were also conducted during March, with more to follow in the upcoming months. Ultimately, March indicates an optimistic turning point for tourism in Maldives.

A GLANCE AT WASTE MANAGEMENT PROTOCOLS IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

By: Ibrahim Fikry

AVOIDANCE
MINIMIZATION
REUSE
RECYCLING
RECOVERY
TREATMENT
DISPOSAL



"To waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified."

- Theodore Roosevelt
26th President of the United States of America

Photo by: Cinnamon Dhonveli Maldives

Solid waste disposal is one of the most concerning issues arising from the tourism industry. Improperly disposed waste from tourist establishments are ending up in the surrounding oceans, washed ashore of inhabited islands and sometime on the shores of the very tourist establishments. Rubbish floating on water and washing up on beaches is a critical aesthetic issue, which does not fit into tourist's image of the Maldives. If we continue the current waste management practices, it can result in numerous environmental problems such as contamination of ground water, insect infestation, fire, obnoxious odor, degradation and deterioration of natural beauty and environmental pollution. Considering all environmental issues, waste management is an issue which can be resolved easily.

Existing Waste Management Policies

Environmental Protection and Preservation Act (EPPA) of the Maldives (Law No. 4/93), clause 7 states that "Any type of waste, oil, poisonous gases or any substances that may have harmful effects on the environment shall not be disposed within the territory of the Maldives". The Waste management procedures are detailed out in the Waste Management Regulation (2013/R-58) issued by the Ministry of Environment on 5th August 2013.

The Regulation on the Protection and Conservation of Environment in the Tourism Industry mandates that a waste incinerator, a compactor, a glass/bottle crusher and a garden waste shredder should be installed in resorts for treatment and disposal of waste.

The Ministry of Tourism raised concerns regarding floating garbage and threats to biodiversity and brought it to the attention of all tourist establishments with the issuance through the circular dated 15th April 2019 (Ref. No. 88-DS/CIR/2019/18) and another circular dated 3rd June 2019 (Ref. No. 88-ES/CIR/2019/22)

According to the Regulation on the Protection and Conservation of Environment in the Tourism Industry (Published on 20th July 2006), the waste management scheme in a tourist establishment should be guided by

the following principles:

- The waste management of the tourist establishment will be in accordance with government regulations.
- The first priority would be to minimise the amount of waste generated.
- Practical and feasible separation of solid waste into a valuable material fraction and a residual waste fraction.
- Separate handling of the different fractions.
- Practical feasible treatment and disposal measures
- Attention to specific comfort and safety requirements of the facility.
- Avoidance of odor and visibility and strict observance of fire protection requirements.
- Registration by amount of respective waste type/type of valuable material as a base for further decisions concerning waste management.
- Waste from tourist facility should be disposed of in a manner that causes the least damage to the environment.
- Any type of waste that damages the marine environment should not be thrown into the sea.
- Open pit burning is not allowed.



Photo by: Ibrahim Fikry

HAZARDOUS WASTE

- DON'T mix with general waste stream*
- Don't throw in to the sea*
- Don't bury in the ground*
- Don't tip down the sink*

Waste Management Programmes

Tourist facility need to have a comprehensive waste management programme. The management programme would consist of the following activities;

- Assessment of the amount and composition of waste*
- Minimisation of waste generated*
- Collection and separation of solid waste*
- Intermediary storage*
- Treatment/recycling inside and outside the tourist facility*
- Transfer and final disposal*

Within the integrated waste management plan, importance should be given to the prevention and minimisation of waste. Minimisation of waste production reduces the need for disposal, treatment costs and negative environmental impacts.

Waste generated in the tourist establishment can be classified into the following waste categories

- Domestic waste (excluding Kitchen waste)*
- Kitchen waste*
- Green waste*
- Hazardous waste*
- Sewage sludge*

Waste Handling and Storages

All tourist establishments should have a dedicated "Waste Management Center/Facility" within the premises of the establishment.

Waste can be segregated into the following categories for easy storage and transfer

Combustible general waste, Metals, Plastic, Glass, Sanitary and Medical waste, Hazardous waste, e-waste, Waste oil and oil-based equipment/parts/material, Fiberglass, Sewage sludges etc..

Transfer and Final Disposal

Waste transfer vessel should be registered according to the regulations. During transfer, all waste should be properly covered and labeled according to the regulations. Final disposal site should be approved by the government before disposal

Waste Log

Tourist establishment should maintain record of all waste generated, recycled, transfer, disposal etc. Records, logs and report formats should be prepared as per the regulations. Logs and reports should be available upon the request of government.

Regulatory Requirement

All tourist establishments should comply with regulations, guidelines etc. issued by the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Environment and Environmental Protection Agency

IN CONVERSATION WITH

MR. MOHAMED MAHDY



“

The tourism industry is a great sector to get into and a great opportunity to expand one's wings if you are to excel not only in your personal but also your professional lives

Mr. Mohamed Mahdy's beginning was humble. After completing a one-year General Hotel Service Course, he began his career in the hospitality industry in 1991. From a kitchen trainee at Bathala Island Resort he became the Assistant Vice President at Aitken Spence Corporate office in Male'. Read on to find out about the talent journey of a Kitchen Trainee who excelled his career to be a Director of a subsidiary of a Sri Lankan conglomerate.

How did you start your hospitality career?

I started my career in the hospitality industry in 1991 as a Kitchen Trainee at Bathala Island Resort. My job description entailed cleaning the kitchen, washing pots and pans, peeling potatoes and onions and cleaning vegetables to name a few.

What is your view on the tourism industry of the Maldives today, compared to how it was when you joined the industry in 1991?

Maldives was a unique destination at the very beginning and our supply to discerning tourists was at a very low figure. There were very few places of accommodation and a huge demand existed. Tourists were interested in the island's natural beauty and what we had to offer as an island and eventually we became an expensive destination. As a matter of fact, today there are many tourist establishments popping up like

mushrooms and the aspect of sustainability is getting threatened as a result of it.

In your opinion what sustainability factors should we focus on when developing tourism in the Maldives?

Maldives has a sensitive culture and we need to embrace tourism developments that will not harm our beliefs and rituals in any way. I also believe in creating an atmosphere of tourism that would cater to a niche rather than opening up to everyone.

When it comes to resort operations and developments, these entities would always impact our ecosystem and immediate environment, so will tend to anyway become affected to some level, so we wouldn't be able to entirely make it as eco-friendly. So, we need to safeguard our islands, its coral reefs and the pristine marine life.

What are your biggest concerns or challenges for your business as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic?

The negative impact of this pandemic on the tourism industry is unimaginable and the resorts are faced with unique challenges in continuing our operations. We are in an industry where we sell experiences to our guests and a main part of this experience includes interactions between the customer and our employees which has extremely reduced in this situation.

"I strongly believe that loyalty, honesty, integrity, commitment, and my passion for hard work with patience are the key values that have made me into who I am today."

We cannot show our smiles to the customers for health and safety reasons. Things are so unpredictable that we have to be on constant alert in case a guest or an employee gets positive for COVID 19. When we get a positive result, resort will be put under monitoring which restricts movement, and quarantining of employees leads to additional workload for other employees.

Managing the cashflow and additional costs related to the health and safety measures when there is a heavy reduction in rates is another challenge we face in the current situation. Reduced contact with the local communities, and restrictions in family visits adversely affect the morale and motivation of our employees making it difficult to maintain high standard of service. Globally, travel bans, border closures, quarantine measures are negatively affecting the tourism based economy recovery process.

What advice would you offer to those who are inspired to become successful in the hotel industry?

Start from scratch, where you can grasp the position you hold to the max and the task in hand and work on climbing the tourism career ladder, step by step.

The tourism industry is a great sector to get into and a great opportunity to expand one's wings if you are to excel not only in your personal but also in your professional lives. This industry no doubt gave me many wings which I chose to fly with. It is an industry for anyone with the courage, attitude and determination needed to reach the top. However, at a young age, do not focus too much on the position you hold or the amount of money you make. Look toward a place that will give you opportunities to develop yourself.

In my case, I was lucky to be a part of Aitken Spence Hotels at the early stages where the pathway was created for me and I embraced it to the maximum. And



here I am today. I started as a Trainee Cook with this organization and today, I am a Director at one of the largest foreign resort operators in the Maldives.

What influenced you to become the person you are today?

I strongly believe that loyalty, honesty, integrity, commitment, and my passion for hard work with patience are the key values that have made me into who I am today.

My father was an influential figure when it came to my successes in life and is a great inspiration towards my professional progress. He was also strongly behind my adherence to discipline and embracing strong work ethics, so I owe a lot to him for being with me every step of the way.

What are your next career steps?

I hope to continue to acquire more knowledge and keep moving myself while continuing to help the company achieve its short-term objectives and long-term goals and assist in taking the company to even greater heights. I am still a learner myself. I will go all the way and hope to work as a coach in this field for youth where I can share my knowledge and knowhow.



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Tourism can be a force for good in our world, playing a part in protecting our planet and its biodiversity, and celebrating what makes us human: from discovering new cultures to connecting with new people and experiences.

- UN Secretary General,
Antonio Guterres



WOMEN IN TOURISM

Ms. NANI RASHEED

The HR Manager of Conrad Maldives



“

A huge part of our goal is to attract female candidates to join the hospitality industry. I would love to see a day when we are able to create enough awareness in the community about the wonderful opportunities in the resort, especially about the safe environment we have created at the resorts

Tell us a little bit about yourself?

I am from Male' and moved to Sri Lanka at the age of thirteen in pursuit of a better education with my family. I am the eldest in the family with three other siblings. After ten years in Sri Lanka, I completed my Bachelor's degree in Marketing and moved back to the Maldives and joined Conrad Maldives for my first ever real job!

I am passionate about history, culture, meeting and connecting with people from all walks of life. What better way to do that than to travel. I make it a point to take time to travel (backpack) whenever I can to travel off the beaten path to get a real sense of the different cultures. It is fascinating and I find it incredibly eye opening.

After a marketing degree why did you choose the HR Department?

Funny enough, I majored in marketing and had high hopes of building a career in marketing. My discovery of HR was an accidental one. As I mentioned before, Conrad Maldives stood out to me at the first glance. Unfortunately, at that time there were no marketing positions available. Alternatively, they offered me the role of HR Officer.

I was reluctant at first, but the minute I stepped on the island I immediately felt at home. This was because of all the welcoming faces and the spectacular facilities offered for team members. I did contemplate switching my career from HR to marketing during the first two years of work but I was always drawn back to HR.

How is your journey so far and what motivates to stay in this job?

I am a people person. It might be a cliché but I simply enjoy all aspects of HR, either it be meeting new people (candidates) through the recruitment process, counseling a team member, being part of someone's development and coaching them or simply throwing a fabulous team gathering. The hospitality industry has provided me all these opportunities through my role in HR. It has been a great journey for me specially working for such an international brand like Hilton where growth and possibilities are endless.

What is a typical day for you at work like?

The HR function in a resort has many facets. It is not just limited to recruitment or employee relations, a huge part of it is engagement. The most important part in fact is how we retain and keep the team happy and engaged. Working away from family and friends and being based in an isolated environment is not easy.

As such as part from the normal day to day activities of HR it is important to drive engagement events from our team. A normal day for me starts with morning briefing for the team followed by the leadership briefing. Throughout the day we focus on the main HR areas such as recruitment, training, travel arrangements, ensuring that team facilities are well looked after, career conversations etc. Throughout the week I also make sure that I attend all team events whether it is a football game between departments or a simple Karaoke night.

We try and have an event or an activity at least 2-3 times a week so that everyone has a chance to take part. As an HR person it is important to be visible and approachable by your team. Basically, HR function in a resort is not just a day job but you are on call 24/7.

What's the biggest challenge you've had to make and how did it impact your life?

I joined Conrad Maldives at a very young age and this resort being one of the oldest international hotel brand in Maldives, had many long standing team members in service. Although it is a very inclusive environment, being the new kid on the block, I had to gain the respect of senior members of the team. It took some time and a few struggles to be able to climb up the hierarchy, but with my perseverance and hard work I was able to overcome and gain the respect of my colleagues. I am

"I am a woman of ambition and perseverance and inspired by women of the same nature. I strongly believe that it does not have to be just about one's career because there is more than just one factor that contributes to a fulfilled and happy life."

very proud to say that I am now the youngest head of the department.

How difficult is it for you to balance the responsibilities of work and life?

Work and life integration has been a great challenge. I have been very lucky to meet my husband at Conrad Maldives. Not many working in resorts have this luxury. As you know the HR function in a resort is 24/7 unlike a city hotel where you checkout when you finish for the day. I consciously have to make time to thrive outside of a work setting.

Do you think women in this industry have a hard time climbing up the ladder?

Not just in HR but I think women do face a few challenges as they also have traditional shoes to fill. Cooking, household chores, feeding the kids etc. I think in order to really support women going into the workforce we need better childcare, flexi/work from home arrangements and more shared responsibilities in the household.

The hospitality industry here in the Maldives is experiencing tremendous growth and this means more employment opportunities for both men and women. Nowadays, more and more resorts are highlighting the value and contribution of women in the success of the industry. I believe women will not have a hard time in further developing their career in hospitality because most international brands have a culture of equality and inclusivity.

What do you think is the most significant barrier to female leadership in tourism?

In the Maldives, taking on hospitality roles means that you will have to move to a resort, away from friends and family. Sadly, societal norms still to an extent dictate that females should not work in resorts and that it is an environment built by men for men.

The good news is that this is now slowly changing as the country evolves and develops. It is encouraging to see a lot of women in lead roles not only in the hospitality industry but in government sectors as well.

Do you think it is difficult to be in a leadership role for women in a male-dominated profession?

Gender was never a barrier for me. I began my career with the goal of being part of an industry where I can thrive as a person within a community, advance in my

career and contribute to the vision of the company. I am a woman of ambition and perseverance and inspired by women of the same nature. I strongly believe that it does not have to be just about one's career because there is more than just one factor that contributes to a fulfilled and happy life.

What is your biggest dream?

I would like to be part in developing a framework in the Maldives that encourages and allows women not to choose career or family, but something that allows them to have both. This will include implementing flexible work or work from home opportunities where we can all contribute without having to choose one or the other.

What changes do you wish to see happen that would make it more attractive for female leaders, especially locals?

A huge part of our goal is to attract female candidates to join the hospitality industry. I would love to see a day when we are able to create enough awareness in the community about the wonderful opportunities in the resort, especially about the safe environment we have created at the resorts such as having a female doctor, separate accommodation blocks for female team members. Additionally, the special events focused on female team members, such as empowerment workshops. If we are able to create enough awareness in the community this would be a big win.

Do you have role models of exceptional leadership in your life?

My mom is my role model. She is a strong, independent lady who raised me and my three siblings as a single parent. She instilled in me strong values and taught me the power of kindness. At Conrad Maldives, my GM, Carla Puverel who joined us recently has been an inspiration and a big supporter of women empowerment. From the international community, Jacinda Ardern, the prime minister of New Zealand. I find her work on equality and inclusivity very inspiring.

What advice would you give to women trying to break into leadership roles and young females looking for job opportunities in the hospitality industry?

All good things take time and change doesn't happen overnight but the important thing is no matter how long it takes, do not lose your spark and determination to change the world.

A RISING STAR

Ms. AMINATH MAASHA

Commis at Six Senses Laamu



Always believe in yourself. Don't let anyone stop you from achieving your dreams. Nothing is impossible with hard work and determination





“I always loved the hospitality industry and the opportunities it provided for the young people. It made me more responsible and independent!”

Aminath Maasha is an enthusiastic young chef who grew up in the island of Holhudhoo in Noonu Atoll with a passion for culinary arts. After finishing O' Levels, she moved to Male' in 2017, joined Maldives National University and completed a 6 months course on culinary arts, to pursue her culinary dream. It was this short but intensive program that led her to the hospitality industry in 2018, an apprenticeship opportunity at Four Seasons Resort Maldives. Her career as a Chef began at Jumeirah Vittaveli when she started working at the resort as a Commis Chef. Moving up the ladder and broadening her exposure to the culinary field in the hospitality industry she moved to Six Senses Laamu in 2020 and is working there as a Commis.

Encouraged by the diversity of opportunities available in the tourism sector, Ms. Maasha had always dreamt of working in the hospitality industry even as a little girl, *“I always loved the hospitality industry and the opportunities it provided for the young people”*; she said. Living in a resort island, away from family and friends was one of the toughest decisions she had to make so far. She believes it made her become more responsible and independent, *“It also taught me useful life skills like time management and multitasking”* she said feeling gratitude.

As a Commis, she has a busy schedule with double shift duties. Her round starts in the morning, gets a break in the afternoon and again in the evening she would be on duty which most days will go on till night. Her busy schedule, however does not stop her from connecting with her loved ones, *“I always try my best to balance work and personal life. No matter how busy it gets, I always find time to connect with my loved ones”*, she explained.

Like many, Maasha also believes that the tourism industry of the Maldives is a heavily male dominated industry and it is difficult for women to progress specially in leadership roles. Pondering on her own journey, she said *“I faced many challenges when I started my career in this industry. But I always believed that I can achieve my goals if I work hard with dedication”*. Pointing out the issues she said, *“to welcome women we need to create policies that reflect issues of women. And for that I believe women should be at leadership positions, at least their perspectives should be included in decision making at different levels”*. She went on to add *“the society's view on girls working in this industry needs to change. I really wish it would and believe that's the main reason why there are not many women applying for leadership positions in this industry”*.

Maasha has a loving family behind her back, cheering for her and motivating her. Her mother is her role model, *“she inspires me to work hard and live independently”* she said with love and admiration. Her biggest dream is *“to excel in this career and be an inspiration to all the girls who are thinking about a career in this industry”* she declared confidently.

Her advice to those reluctant but dreaming of a career in the hospitality industry is simple, *“this industry is a great platform to showcase your skills and build a rewarding career. Always believe in yourself. Don't let anyone stop you from achieving your dreams. Nothing is impossible with hard work and determination”*.



“

Reopening is not just for tourism, but for the overall recovery beyond our sector.

*- Vice President of European Commission,
Margaritis Schinas*

CRUNCHING NUMBERS

Tourist arrivals to the Maldives recorded 109,585 in March 2021, which brings the total tourist arrivals to 298,570 in absolute numbers. This was a commendable increase of over 9600 arrivals compared to the month of February in 2021. Maldives is welcoming more and more tourists each month, showing signs of recovery. Due to the border closure in 2020, monthly growth of March 2021 rebounded to a positive 83.6%. In comparison to pre-covid performance of 2019, March 2021 arrivals stood at a negative 32.7% growth.

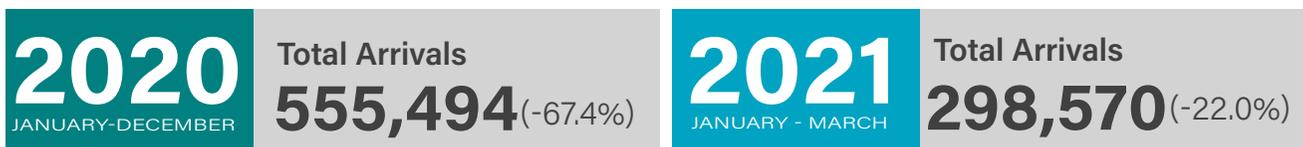
March 2021 was the first month in which arrivals surpassed the 100,000th mark since the opening of borders. While this might be the norm prior to covid, this is a big milestone, with the pandemic still in effect hitting hard on many source markets. Due to the restrictive measures taken to contain the COVID-19 pandemic globally, many major markets in Europe and Asia & the Pacific have still not opened their borders. From countries that have eased travel, tourists have been flying to the Maldives to enjoy the sunny side of life. As such, arrivals have been accelerating at a steady pace in 2021 with an average of 3550 tourists in March and 3320 tourists for the year.

Within this year the highest number of tourists have come from India and Russia, which have been the leading markets to the Maldives So far with 23.3% and 21.3% shares respectively. Trend depicts an increase of tourists from CIS countries such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Czech Republic, as a result of the good connectivity of charter flights from the region. During the month, Germany stepped up to the 4th rank in the top ten list while France weighed down to the 10th place. In the middle of the month U.K market lost its position in the top ten list. Regardless of this, U.K market picked up and ended ranking in the 8th place by the end of March 2021.

One of the main airlines to the Maldives, Singapore Airlines resumed flights to the Maldives on 30th March 2021. The airline will be flying 3 times a week from Changi airport and is expected to boost arrivals from the region. Furthermore, Air Vistara commenced direct flights from India starting from 3rd March 2021.

Moving to bed capacity updates, at the end of March, 150 resorts, 11 hotels, 396 guesthouses and 137 safari vessels are in operation with a combined bed capacity of 46,031. The guesthouses are distributed to 67 islands in 18 atolls while resorts are operational in 19 atolls.

TOURIST ARRIVALS



ARRIVALS	Arrivals			Growth (%)		Daily Average 2021	Duration of Stay 2021 (days)
	2019	2020	2021	2021/2019	2021/2020		
January	151,552	173,347	92,103	-39.2	-46.9	2,971	9.2
February	168,583	149,785	96,882	-42.5	-35.3	3,460	8.8
March	162,843	59,630	109,585	-32.7	+83.8	3,355	8.7
Total	482,978	382,762	298,570	-38.2	-22.0	3,317	8.9

MARKET TRENDS

(Arrivals as at end March 2021)



AMERICAS	EUROPE	AFRICA	MIDDLE EAST	ASIA & THE PACIFIC
2020 32,060 (-62.2%)	2020 348,349 (-58.2%)	2020 6,458 (-65.5%)	2020 26,288 (-56.2%)	2020 142,243 (-79.8%)
2021 (as at end Mar) 1,3372 (-28.6%)	2021 (as at end Mar) 195,515 (-18.2%)	2021 (as at end Mar) 3,198 (-3.4%)	2021 (as at end Mar) 7,729 (-42.5%)	2021 (as at end Mar) 78,683 (-27.2%)

1.		India (23.4%) 69,730 (+100.0%)
2.		Russia (21.3%) 63,523 (+119.4%)
3.		Ukraine (6.0%) 17,921 (+293.4%)
4.		Germany (4.9%) 14,664 (-48.1%)
5.		Kazakhstan (4.4%) 13,124 (+373.6%)

TOP 10 MARKETS by Nationality

(as of 31st March 2021)

6.		Romania (3.0%) 9,013 (+124.4%)
7.		U.S.A (2.7%) 8,038 (-29.6%)
8.		U.K (2.7%) 7,934 (-75.8%)
9.		Czech Republic (2.5%) 7,534 (+73.1%)
10.		France (2.4%) 7,181 (-67.0%)

1.		India: 65,280 % of Indians (97.4%)
2.		Russia: 59,312 % of Russian (98.6%)
3.		Ukraine: 16,617 % of Ukrainians (97.6%)
4.		U.A.E: 13,587 % of Emiratis (18.4%)
5.		Germany: 13,381 % Germans (88.1%)

TOP 10 ARRIVALS by Country of Residence

(as of 31st March)

6.		Kazakhstan: 12,527 % Kazakhs (95.8%)
7.		Romania: 8,487 % of Romanians (96.7%)
8.		Switzerland: 8,057 % Swiss (70.6%)
9.		Czech Republic: 6,879 % Czech (+93.3%)
10.		U.S.A: 6,497 % of Americans (85.7%)

FACILITY UPDATES

(In Operation as at end March 2021)

H.A. ATOLL

2 Resorts 394 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
7 Guesthouses 84 Beds

H.DH. ATOLL

1 Resort 118 Beds
1 Hotels 104 Beds
3 Guesthouses 50 Beds

SH. ATOLL

2 Resorts 457 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
1 Guesthouse 8 Beds

N. ATOLL

7 Resorts 1,398 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
1 Guesthouses 24 Beds

R. ATOLL

12 Resorts 3,088 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
0 Guesthouses 0 Beds

LH. ATOLL

9 Resorts 2,250 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
1 Guesthouses 12 Beds

B. ATOLL

16 Resorts 2,953 Beds
1 Hotels 150 Beds
22 Guesthouses 410 Beds

K. ATOLL

49 Resorts 11,892 Beds
6 Hotels 856 Beds
163 Guesthouses 3,836 Beds

A.A. ATOLL

9 Resorts 1,906 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
89 Guesthouses 1,182 Beds

A.DH. ATOLL

16 Resorts 4,200 Beds
1 Hotels 56 Beds
44 Guesthouses 682 Beds

V. ATOLL

3 Resorts 614 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
33 Guesthouses 404 Beds

M. ATOLL

2 Resorts 400 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
1 Guesthouse 12 Beds

DH. ATOLL

8 Resorts 2,782 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
7 Guesthouses 84 Beds

F. ATOLL

1 Resort 250 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
1 Guesthouses 14 Beds

L. ATOLL

2 Resorts 242 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
2 Guesthouses 78 Beds

TH. ATOLL

1 Resort 152 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
1 Guesthouse 12 Beds

G.A. ATOLL

6 Resorts 1,036 Beds
1 Hotels 136 Beds
1 Guesthouse 12 Beds

G.DH. ATOLL

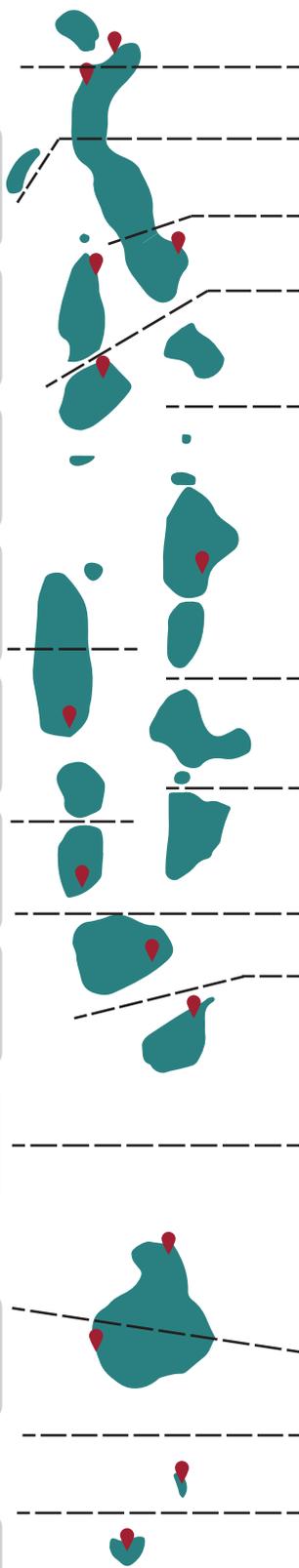
3 Resorts 550 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
3 Guesthouses 48 Beds

GN. ATOLL

0 Resorts 0 Beds
0 Hotels 0 Beds
15 Guesthouses 186 Beds

S. ATOLL

1 Resorts 100 Beds
1 Hotels 156 Beds
8 Guesthouses 164 Beds



Accommodation Facilities (as of end March 2021)

	No.s	Beds
Resorts / Marinas	150	34,782
Hotels	11	1,458
Guesthouses	396	7,218
Safari Vessels	137	2,699
Total	694	46,157

“

People are eager to travel. But first they want to feel SAFE.

*- Secretary General of UNWTO
Zurab Pololikashvili*



MONTH IN REVIEW



GOLDEN YEAR *
OF TOURISM 2022

Unveiling of Maldives Tourism Golden Jubilee Logo

Ministry of Tourism has unveiled the logo which will be used to celebrate and promote the country's Golden Jubilee Year of Tourism. Year 2022 will mark the 50th anniversary for the Maldives tourism. Tourism industry pioneers and partners gathered at a virtual ceremony hosted by the Ministry of Tourism on 10th March 2021 to inaugurate this logo.

The ceremony was graced by, the Chairman of Maldives Association of Tourism Industry, Mr. Mohamed Umar Manik, the Vice Chairman of Maldives Association of Tourism Industry Mr. Hussein Afeef, and the Minister of Health, Mr. Ahmed Naseem who are among the industry pioneers who played instrumental roles in introducing tourism to the Maldives in back in the 1970s.

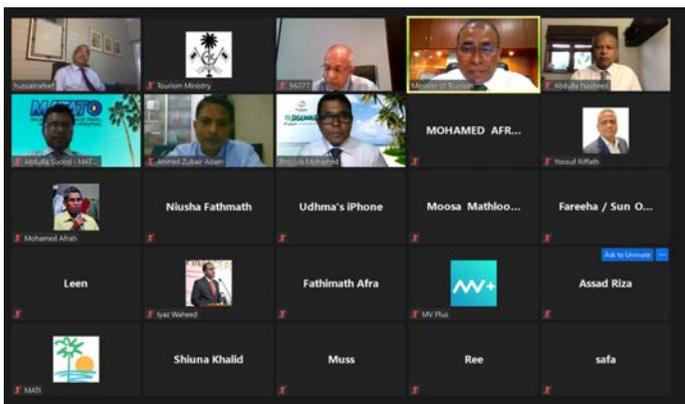
Also in attendance at this historical ceremony were the first Minister of Tourism Honourable Ahmed Mujuthaba, the Managing Director of Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation, Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed and the President of Guesthouse Association Mr. Abdulla Nasheed.

Speaking at the ceremony, the pioneers of the industry highlighted the developments that have occurred in the tourism industry over the years, stressed on the safety and security aspects of the country as a destination and the importance of local involvement in this industry.

The ceremony was concluded by Minister of Tourism, Dr. Abdulla Mausoom. In his speech he highlighted the need for local participation and empowerment in the tourism industry of Maldives. Minister thanked the industry partners, employees and all who are involved in making Maldives a world class destination.

The ceremony was followed by a media briefing. Minister of Tourism Dr. Abdulla Mausoom along with industry partners answered questions from the media.

The logo was designed by two freelance artists, Mr. Abdullah Nashath and Mr. Mohamed Azlif, and symbolizes the Maldives' rich environment, culture and heritage.



Minister of Tourism Participates in Maldives Promotions in India

Minister of Tourism, Dr. Abdulla Mausoom visited India on an official trip to New Delhi, India from 24th to 26th March 2021 to attend the Delhi Roadshow and SATTE India. On his arrival at Delhi, he was welcomed at the airport by the High Commissioner of Maldives in India, H.E Hussain Niyaz.

During this trip, Minister, Dr. Mausoom along with the High Commissioner, Niyaz and Managing Director of Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed, participated in the "Maldives Media Meet", a media event organized by the MMPRC and answered questions from the Indian Media.

The South Asian Travel and Tourism Exchange (SATTE) in India, is the first main non-virtual Travel and Tourism Trade show the Maldives participated since the global lockdown. The Maldives stand at SATTE was inaugurated by the Minister of Tourism Dr. Abdulla Mausoom where he appeared as special guest of Honor. The event was also attended by the High Commissioner of Maldives in India and the MMPRC team led by Managing Director, Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed.



Minister of Tourism Makes an Official Visit to Addu City

The Minister of Tourism, Dr. Abdulla Mausoom along with a delegation of senior officials from Ministry of Tourism visited Addu City from 17th to 18th March 2021. He was accompanied by Hithadhoo South Constituency Member of Parliament Mr. Ibrahim Nazil and Managing Director of Inner Maldives Mr. Mohamed Firaq. This delegation was hosted by Addu City Council.

During this visit, key issues pertaining to tourism in the city were discussed with Addu City Council. Besides the plans to expand tourism in the City, discussions were also revolved on the efforts to re-open the two closed resorts in the city, while bringing back the Gan International airport to momentum. Furthermore, this year's tourism day celebrations are also planned to be held in Addu City.

The highlight of the trip was awarding of the tourism land plots to the bid winners. As such, a ceremony was held to handover the plot of lands for development of tourist guesthouses and city hotels on 18th March 2021. Minister of Tourism Dr. Abdulla Mausoom handed over a total of 31 lands to the bid winners during the ceremony. With these additional developments, it is anticipated over 5000 beds will come into operation in the southern zone by 2023.





UNWTO Global Crisis Committee Meeting Concluded

Minister of Tourism Dr. Abdulla Mausoom participated in the 5th virtual meeting of the Technical Group of the UNWTO Global Tourism Crisis Committee on 22 March 2021. Discussions continued on setting the new scenario to restart tourism and recommendations on ensuring safetourism while introducing vaccination e-certs.

“Reimagining Tourism” Project Launched

On 29th March, UNDP and Ministry of Tourism launched the inception workshop for the “Reimagining Tourism” project. Over 50 participants joined from relevant Ministries, local councils, private sector, and civil service organizations. The workshop was aimed at identifying past, current, and future initiatives that could be linked to the project and highlighting potential stakeholders.

The “Reimagining Tourism” project aims to transform the tourism experience offered in the Maldives by inclusion of cultural, historical, as well as community-led environmental conservation initiatives. Focused interventions will be taken in Laamu atoll, where the project will work with local councils to integrate tourism development into the local planning process. The project will also focus on accelerating digitization efforts of the guesthouse segment, and prototyping sustainable business models for local tourism.



Jorge Lorenzo Visits the Maldives

Minister of Tourism Hon. Dr. Abdulla Mausoom along with Minister of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment Hon. Ahmed Mahloof and members of Maldives Racing Association welcomed the famous racer and three time World MotoGP champion, Mr. Jorge Lorenzo Guerreo at Velana International Airport on the 1st of March 2021. The Maldives racing community were also present at the airport to welcome the Spanish racer. Mr. Lorenzo greeted the fans and enjoyed a photo moment with them at the airport before heading onto his holiday venue in the Maldives.



Maldives Floating City Inaugrated

The Speaker of the Majlis, President Mohamed Nasheed inaugurated the Maldives floating city project on 14 March 2021 at a ceremony held at the Ministry of Tourism. The ceremony was attended by Minister of Tourism Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, the CEO of the Dutch Docklands, Mr. Paul Van De Camp, the project consultant, Mr. Riyaz and some Parliament Members.



Developing a Tourist Hotel in H.A. Kelaa Thu'ndi Area

On 16th March 2021 a Lease Agreement was signed between Ministry of Tourism and FEDO Private Limited to develop a 100 room hotel at Haa Alifu Kelaa Thu'ndi Area. The Minister of Tourism Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, the MP for Kelaa Constituency Mr. Ibrahim Shareef also participated in the signing ceremony held at the Ministry of Tourism.



Celebrating the Repeat Visitors

French Couple of their 60th Visit

Minister of Tourism, Dr. Abdulla Mausoom welcomed the French couple on their 60th holiday trip to the Maldives. Mr. & Mrs. Desaux were greeted at the Velana International Airport on 12 March 2021 by the Minister and were presented with a token of appreciation. The couple who first visited the Maldives in 1994, have spent over 100 days in the Maldives over the last 27 years.

French Couple on their 63rd Visit

The French couple, Mr. and Mrs. Knittel has arrived in the Maldives, on their 63rd visit. The couple embarked on their first adventure to Maldives over 30 years ago in 1991. They received a warm welcome at Velana International Airport by the Ministry of Tourism, Coco Resorts and Maldives Immigration. The Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr. Ahmed Athif joined the ceremony as a special guest.



Monthly Arrivals Surpass 100,000 Since Re-opening

Tourist arrivals recorded over 100,000 tourists in March for the first time since the borders re-opened. To celebrate this milestone, the 100,000th tourist was warmly welcomed at Velana International Airport by officials from the Ministry of Tourism, Maldives Immigration, Maldives Airports Company Limited and the Tourism industry. Ms. Hana Mohamed, from Egypt who had arrived with her husband, Ahmed Kamal Mostafa on their honeymoon from Emirates airline became the 100,000th tourist on 29th March. They were welcomed at the airport presented with special gifts the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Mr. Ahmed. She was also awarded a bronze tier of Maldives Border Miles by Maldives Immigration.

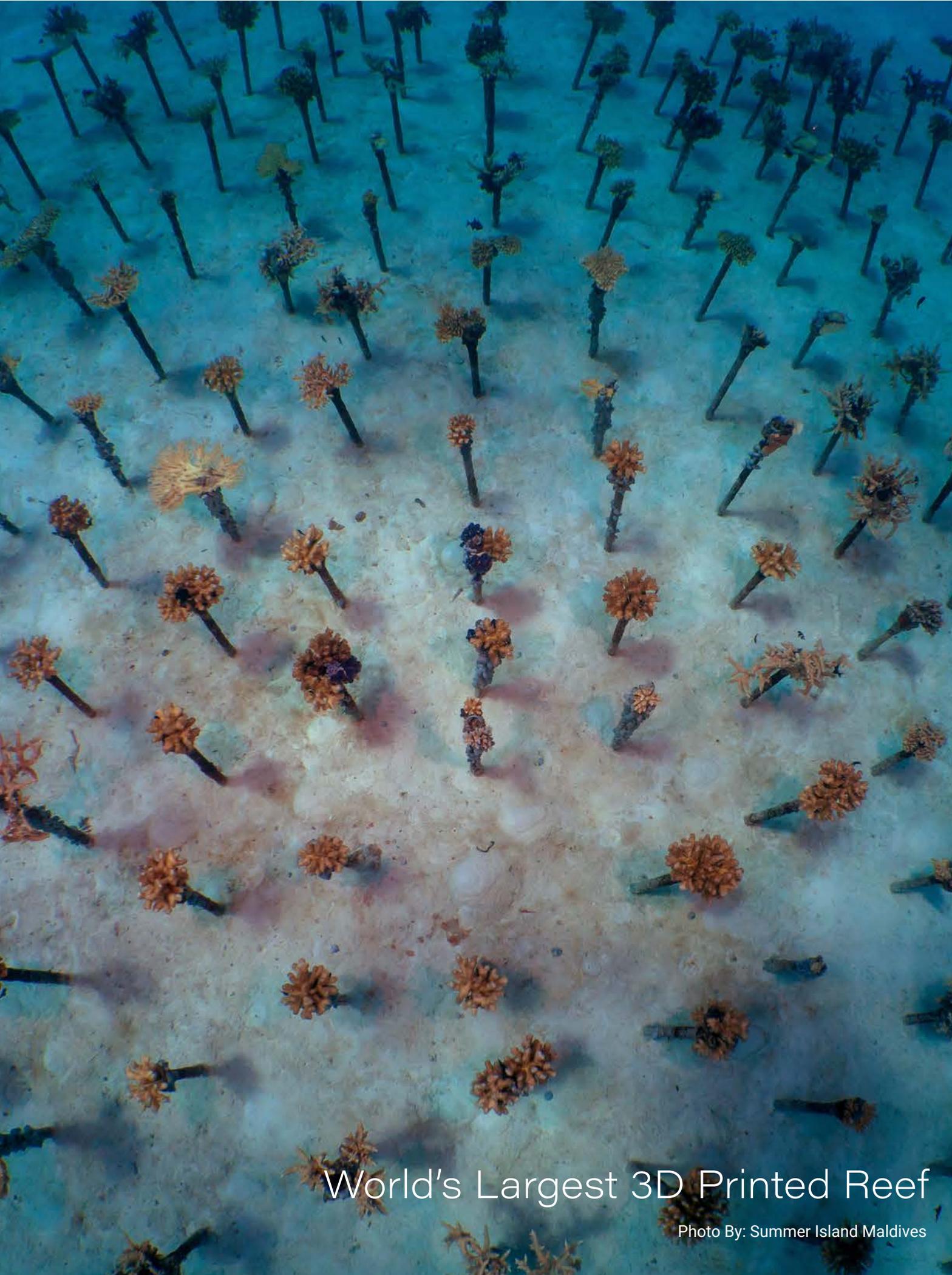


Webinar on new Investment Model & Opportunities to develop tourist islands resorts in the Maldives

The Embassy of Maldives in Germany in Partnership with the Ministry of Tourism have co-hosted the Tourism Investment Webinar 2021 under the name “Discover the new Tourism Business Model of Maldives” on 31st March 2021, targeted towards the European and German pool of investors. The keynote address was delivered by Tourism Minister, Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, which was followed by a detailed presentation and Q & A session.

Over 25 potential investors took part in this webinar who were specifically invited by the Embassy, from resort developers, investors, and real estate companies to financiers from Germany & Europe. The key goal of the Webinar was to share up-to-date information of the investment opportunities in the Maldives, and pave the way for potential investors to bring in their investments into the country, ultimately adding to the economic contributions to the Maldivian economy from the tourism sector.





World's Largest 3D Printed Reef

Photo By: Summer Island Maldives



Guinness World Records Recognizes Summer Island Maldives' 3-D Printed Reef as Largest in the World

By: Summer Island Maldives

The Guinness Book of World Records has recognized Summer Island's 3-D printed coral reef as the largest of its kind in the world, including in the Guinness list of world records this year.

The artificial reef was submerged in 2018, at Summer Island's 'Blue Lagoon' – a sandy part of the lagoon, where the resort hopes to create a new coral reef ecosystem.

The 3-D printed reef aims to provide a new home for corals, fish and other marine species, and demonstrates how new technologies such as 3-D printing can be used to protect the Maldives from climate change and sea level rise. As the world's lowest lying nation, also recognized by Guinness World Records, the Maldives is especially vulnerable to sea level rise.

The 3-D reef project started in Melbourne, Australia, where Industrial designer Alex Goad of Reef Design Lab used sophisticated computer modeling to design reef structures similar to the coral reefs found in the Maldives. A large 3-D printer worked tirelessly for 24 hours moulding the structures out of ceramic, an inert substance similar to the calcium carbonate found in coral reefs.

The moulds were then shipped to the Maldives and filled with marine concrete before being submerged to a depth of seven metres, close to the resort's existing coral nursery. Fragments from the nursery were transplanted onto the 3-D reef.

"While it is rewarding that our 3-D reef is being recognized worldwide, it is important to remind ourselves of the tremendous amount of work that needs to be done to safeguard our environment. As part of our

environment initiatives we have phased out imported drinking water, and placed a ban on single use plastic items, such as straws, bottles and bags. We are continuously looking at innovative ways to push ourselves to be better guardians of the environment," said Summer Island Resort Manager Mari Shareef.

The Guinness World Records has published its record book for over 60 years, including world records on a variety of topics and events. Since its inception, the company has sold close to 150 million copies of the Guinness Book of World Records.

Summer Island Maldives, located on Ziyaaraifushi, is one of the first Resorts in the Maldives. In 1996, Kaimoo group acquired Ziyaaraifushi and rebranded it as Summer Island Village. In 2015, the island was rebuilt entirely and rebranded as Summer Island Maldives. The island is located in North Malé atoll and is 40 minute speedboat ride from Velana International Airport.

Summer Island Maldives was recently awarded the prestigious Holiday Check Gold Award for Being One of Maldives' Most Popular Resorts. It was also awarded South Asia's Leading Beach Resort and Maldives' Leading Beach Resort at the 2017, 2018, and 2019 SATA awards.

A model of the Summer Island 3-D is currently on display at New York's prestigious Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), in an exhibition entitled 'Broken Nature'. According to MoMA, the exhibition highlights the concept of "restorative design" and presents objects and concepts that offer diverse strategies in the effort to help humans repair their relationship to the environments that they share.

Maldives Women Leadership Conference, A MICE Tourism Event

By: IMTM Private Limited



On the occasion of International Women’s day 2021, IMTM Private Limited has officially announced Maldives Women Leadership Conference (MWLC) which is planned to be held virtually in October 2021.

The way we lead organisations and manage people have already been facing changes prior to COVID-19. However, the events of 2020 disrupted the business world to the point where leaders must adapt if they, their teams, and their businesses are to survive and thrive. We have been advocating pro-covid recovery initiatives through strategic online conferencing platforms.

Maldives Women Leadership Conference is a MICE (Meetings, Incentive, Conference and Exhibition) tourism event that will serve as a networking conference to connect business minds, to inspire in creating new women leaders. The conference aims to educate female entrepreneurs and to provide business networking opportunities and growth through empowerment and equality. It also aims to enable leaders to benchmark good practices around the world.

This year’s conference will be a platform that sets the stage for the MICE event at the Maldives Women Leadership Conference that can be physically held in conjunction with the decline in the global pandemic.

Hawwa Shiuna Khalid, Managing Director of IMTM Pvt Ltd said, “It is my great pleasure to announce the Maldives Women Leadership Conference 2021. This conference will be an exciting; ‘one of its kind’ platform for women, in both public and private sector. The conference will allow professional women to gain knowledge and acquire critical thinking on leadership. We have channeled the conference to ensure that

women can use the platform to voice out concerns relating to barriers at work, equality issues and creating a consolidated consensus to come together concerning leadership opportunities at work.”

“It will also offer a unique opportunity for women across industries to discuss critical issues facing them and success driving factors in industries today. We want women to be prepared for the challenges of tomorrow. The main focus remains, to harness women unity and encourage continuous development to be leaders for tomorrow. Listening to professionals, listening to leaders, listening to success driving champions.” Shiuna further stated.

An analytical summary of best practices and lessons learned from the interactive session of the conference will be prepared by MWLC, that will be submitted to MNU, Ministry of Tourism and MPRC to be considered for policy improvement. It is also envisaged that the deliberations will lead to actionable suggestions and follow-up actions for the relevant stakeholders in the countries in Asia in the overall context of women leadership especially in the tourism industry.



CNN Features Two Resorts in the Maldives in Article about best All-Inclusive Resorts in the World

Best All- Inclusive Resort in the Maldives

By: Lily Beach Resort



CNN has recently featured Lily Beach Resort & Spa and Kurumba Maldives among the 'Best All-Inclusive' resorts in the world, which further cements their position as leaders of luxury All-Inclusive resort experience in the Maldives. The list is derived from TripAdvisor's Top 25 All-Inclusive Resorts in the World 2020, which places Lily Beach in the 11th position and Kurumba Maldives in the 21st position.

In the list, CNN regarded Lily Beach Resort & Spa, which is the pioneer of the all-inclusive concept in the Maldives, as the perfect option for a 'quintessential Maldives experience'. Likewise, the list highlighted that the luxury all-inclusive resort provides access to more than 50 diving sites as its located in prime location in South Ari Atoll in the Maldives.

Lily Beach Resort & Spa has always had a good reputation when it came to providing a great all-inclusive experience based on the all-inclusive meal plan that was made popular in the world by Club Med. It consists of all meals being accounted for, great lodging, no surprise overcharged invoice at the end of the stay, some activities and excursions included in the plan, and most importantly having great tasting food and drinks. It's not rocket-science but Lily Beach has got their all-inclusive offering and experience down to a T- all the positive reviews on TripAdvisor stand as a testament to this.

Lily Beach secured the 1st place in TripAdvisor's Best All-Inclusive Resorts in Asia for 3 consecutive years. The Traveler's Choice Awards are based on the millions of reviews and opinions collected from TripAdvisor travellers worldwide.

The island retreat pioneered Maldives' all-inclusive concept in 1994. Afterwards, the resort underwent and extensive renovation and reopened in 2009 as a luxury resort. Hence, the unique, pioneering concept of "Affordable Luxury", the first 5-star All-Inclusive Platinum Plan Resort in the Maldives was born.

With the overall concept of 'Affordable Luxury' in mind, Lily Beach's 'Platinum Plan' is a Premium All-Inclusive Plan, offering tourists an absolute value-for-money and a hassle-free vacation. In addition to that, the platinum plan offers a fantastic array of exclusive experiences from fine dining, dreamy excursions, and sports activities, to high-quality products like premium wines and spirits- this puts their plan apart from other contenders. Moreover, the only meal plan available at the resort is the Platinum plan, which shows that the resort management is all-in with the all-inclusive concept.

Globally reputed for its pristine beaches and the exotic house reef, the hosts at Lily Beach are highly adept at every level of the resort in the provision of the all-inclusive concept. This has allowed Lily Beach Resort & Spa to succeed the likes of international brands (such as Club Med in the Maldives) and other local brands in the Maldives offering similar all-inclusive plans.

Consistently reinventing itself and pushing ahead further than the competition gained the local owner-operator, Lily Hotels an upper hand. Moreover, as a winner of multiple awards and recognitions throughout the years, Lily Beach Resort & Spa continuously proved itself as the best all-inclusive resort in the region and among the best in the world

Radisson Blu Resort Maldives Scoops Key Title in Luxury Lifestyle Awards 2021

By: Radisson Blu Resort Maldives



FEEL THE DIFFERENCE

After opening in August 2020, the Radisson Blu Resort Maldives is the first of its kind to make this tropical location it's home. With the Indian Ocean providing a breathtaking backdrop, the hotel is ideally suited for providing the best experiences for its guests. The mix of indulgent villas, lavish and varied dining experiences alongside world-class service secured the title of The Best Luxury Hotel in Maldives in the Luxury Lifestyle Awards 2021.

Judges were overwhelmed with the attention to detail, along with the team's dedication to creating cherished memorable experiences for each guest. Spacious villas include attention to the interior decor that would be expected from a 5 Star resort. Guests can choose from various villa options, all with private pools, many located overwater for that ultimate ocean experience.

The culinary journey takes guests from Japanese to Mediterranean, each delighting and tantalizing the taste buds. There is a choice of four venues from which guests may choose. The Raha restaurant provides a relaxed and informal option, serving breakfast, lunch and dinner and delighting guests with flavorful and nourishing dishes. The open-air, relaxed atmosphere of

Alifaan specialises in traditional Mediterranean dishes. The design has natural tones and mixed seating around a central show kitchen, where chefs entertain guests with open-air cooking over flames. Kabuki restaurant celebrates the theatre of Japanese cooking techniques and traditions. Culinary delights are prepared and served to guests with some of the freshest ingredients. More formal dining is at The Lab, where a sommelier pairs premium champagnes, wines and cocktails with dinners created by the Chef. Its surroundings are curated to emphasise the intimate setting, and private dining can be provided for up to fifteen guests.

Many guests come to the Maldives to create life long memories, and Mahurab is the perfect late-night spot for indulging in the resort's wines, cocktails and cigars. For those who are looking for that castaway experience, then Crusoe's adult-only venue provides a welcome retreat for explorers with views over the Indian Ocean. The Eats & Beats bar lives up to its name with its assortment of sunset cocktails and freshly baked pizzas, creating that ultimate party vibe.



Developing Skills in Youth to succeed in the Hospitality Industry

By: Movenpick Resort Kuredhivaru Maldives

Movenpick Resort Kuredhivaru Maldives is committed to launching, encouraging, and federating initiatives designed to support the economic and social development of its host communities. The resort promotes the hiring of local hotel staff; offer training programs to develop the skills and employability of local employees who have not initially been prepared for hospitality jobs. The resort through its skill development training initiatives aims to establish a strong and well-trained workforce for the resort and the hospitality industry within the country.

Post pandemic reopening of the resort in October 2020, Movenpick Resort Kuredhivaru provided several career opportunities to the local talents at all levels to ramp up its operations and in this endeavor as on March 2021, 58% of the total resort manpower represents local talents with 42% management, 48% supervisory and 61% of rank and file level workforce are Maldivian youth and professionals.

The underlying concept of this skill development initiative is that of learning on the job. Classroom sessions are tailored as per the 70/20/10 approach of which 70% of development activity is based on experience and exposure; 20% is around coaching and feedback (on the job) and 10% is on formalized training (classroom training & e-learning). At the end of the program, trainees may apply for permanent employment with the resort or join another employer.

The resort has received positive feedback from the students and the school management about the initiative, In the words Mr. Hussain Sabah Work Placement / Outreach Center Coordinator at Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism Studies, Maldives National University, "The collaboration received from the

management team of Movenpick Resort Kuredhivaru Maldives aligns well with our strategic direction. The way the programme is designed shows advance planning proper guidance from the management team. Interns were guided to note down daily lessons, and skill-based sessions were taken by experts of the field. Overall, the internship programme has delivered knowledge of the workplace, business etiquette and strong communication skills. The programme has instilled the students with good characteristics, such as integrity, commitment and self-motivation. Based on the facts and support from the Movenpick Resort management team, we are glad to say that it is one of the best platforms for the career growth for the students."

The recent batch of hospitality students from MNU Maldives shared that they were able to work in a diverse environment and enhance their communication, team dynamics and flexibility skills.

"Even during the COVID-19, the management ensured our safety and at the same time giving us a chance to learn in the chosen field", says Mohamed Maazin Shaheed a student and trainee from MNU. "I feel it was a great place to take my first step in the hospitality industry. The knowledge that I have gained here at Mövenpick is immense which will help me in the future" says Sangay Tashi another student and trainee from MNU.

With the vocational skill development opportunities, the resort aims to ensure a focus on aligning on the job learning with job relevant skill set while preparing talent for hospitality industry. Local schools are targeted for this initiative while the resort is also collaborating with multiple stakeholders to meet the objectives of this programme.





Vakkaru Maldives celebrates International Women's Day

By: Vakkaru Maldives

Baa Atoll, Republic of Maldives, 9 March 2021 - This International Women's Day, Vakkaru Maldives celebrates its female team members who play such a vital role in providing all that the resort aspires to offer. Hosting various special programmes provided a way of saying a very big thank you for all our team's hard work, dedication and passion while empowering team members to reach their full potential in everything they do.

The International Women's Day events for team members began with sunrise yoga on the beach conducted by Vakkaru's resident yogi, Anna Tsoy. Female staff also enjoyed a little extra indulgence with a special Starting our Queens Off Right themed breakfast, having the management team serving a special set menu to the ladies. At the team village, special floral displays and fun social events for our female colleagues helped to brighten the day up further.

Vakkaru Maldives General Manager Iain McCormack said: "We are proud to have 53 women working in various departments of the resort, and we strive to provide equal involvement of women in all possible areas, along with opportunities to develop their career and recognise their achievements, while also creating a healthy work-life balance. I wish a Happy International

Women's Day to all of Vakkaru's ladies and I really thank them for all their incredible work."

The resort hosted tailored International Women's Day activities for guests to join in the celebrations. Inspired by a slogan that provides genuine inspiration and guidance to Vakkaru's management approach - "empowered women empower women" - starting off the day with a 'Rise and Shine' morning yoga session conducted by visiting practitioner and spiritual guru, Dawn Harlow. This inspiring Kundalini yoga session allowed women to harness their power and energy through breath, movement and mantras.

Vakkaru's resident Ayurvedic doctor, Dr. Kalani Perera, invited female guests to discover more about women's body, alongside providing some health tips to maintain overall wellbeing. To conclude this special day, Anna Tsoy hosted Ladies' Sundown Yoga in our overwater pavilion overlooking the turquoise lagoon and stunning sunset.

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For many, tourism means a roof over their head & food on the table.

*- Secretary General of UNWTO
Zurab Pololikashvili*



MALDIVIAN CUISINE

“HAALU FOLHI”



Photo by: Fathuhulla Hassan, Unigasdhoshuge / Kulhudhuffushi City

The best crepe from the Maldives

By: Aminath Manal

Local folklores recount a story of a poor woman in the old days, who was a single mother with many children. Times were rough at the time and the distressed mother struggled to put food on the plate. She had very little to feed her children. On one such day, she gathered the few ingredients she had and whipped a thin crepe. Her kids loved this crepe. Slowly she began making it for her neighbors who also found it scrumptious. She went on to make it for others eventually it becoming her livelihood. This crepe is what we know as “Haalu Folhi” today.

While the authenticity of the folklore remains unknown, several women in Kulhudufushi partake in making “Haalu Folhi” for a living today. Haalu Folhi is a thin, almost transparent crepe made from rice flour. It is sweet in flavor and literally melts in the mouth. This delicacy is only made in Kulhudufushi, the capital island of Northern Haa Dhaalu Atoll, and nowhere else in Maldives. The art of making Haalu Folhi has been preserved and carried across generations. Ever since the older generation could recall, Haalu Folhi has been made in their homes. This has made Haalu Folhi a significant element of Kulhudufushi cuisine, and is devoured across the Maldives too.

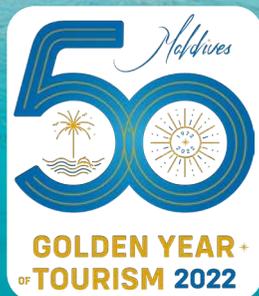
In the early days, Haalu Folhi was cooked on traditional fire wood stoves which has transformed into cement stoves built specially to prepare Haalu Folhi. The pots used are similar to Chinese wok with a large round bottom. This helps Haalu Folhi to maintain its circular shape and texture while cooking. Prepping for the Haalu

Folhi starts with the first rays of the sun. Haalu Folhi is prepared early in the morning, so that it gets ample time in the sun to turn crisp. Once removed from the sun Haalu Folhi turns a softer-crisp.

It only takes a few ingredients to prepare Haalu Folhi like the folklore. These ingredients are quite simple such as rice, sugar, water, coconut oil and eggs. The coconut oil is made organically by heating coconut milk for a long period of time. The water is sometimes infused with jasmine to enhance the flavor.

The rice is soaked overnight and ground to a smooth paste. It is then mixed with water and sugar until a smooth batter is formed. In a separate bowl, coconut oil and eggs are mixed together. This is used to coat the wok like a cooking spray, before a spoonful of batter is poured. Once the batter is poured, it is turned around until the surface of the wok is coated. The finished Haalu Folhi is lined up in the sun and covered with a sheet. When the Haalu Folhi turns crisp, it is removed from the sun and ready to be consumed.

It is best served when soaked with sweetened coconut milk. According to islanders, some people also eat Haalu Folhi soaked with condense milk too. Haalu Folhi can be stored for a long time, which makes it a great gift. The people of Kulhudufushi have a custom where they send Haalu Folhi to family and friends away from the island or even gift it while visiting friends and family which is known as “Haalu Belun” in Dhivehi. There is no specific time or occasion for eating Haalu Folhi. It is so an everyday food, cherished no matter when its eaten. This local delicacy is a must-try at least once.



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