

The Small Cruise Ship Collection

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ULTIMATE MALDIVES: A SNORKELING & DIVING ADVENTURE

Cruise through the lesser-visited southern Maldives aboard the luxurious 26-guest diving live-aboard, Emperor Serenity. With two snorkel or dive options daily, you'll search for whale sharks, hammerhead sharks, manta rays, and dolphins among the stunning underwater topography.



ITINERARY

Day 1 Malé

Arrive in Malé and transfer by boat to Bandos Island Resort in time for lunch. The rest of the day is at leisure to relax after your travels. This evening attend a welcome reception and dinner at the resort.

Day 2 Malé / Embark Emperor Serenity

The morning is yours to lounge by the pool and enjoy the hotel's amenities. Embark the Emperor Serenity in time for lunch and set sail toward North Malé Atoll. The shallow, protected waters here are an ideal location for an orientation snorkel or dive. Return to the ship for dinner.

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Day 3 Kaashidhoo Atoll

Test your skills on a morning snorkel or dive near this idyllic island. This afternoon, step ashore to visit the ruins of an 8th-century Buddhist monastery. Set sail for Rasdhoo Atoll in the late afternoon.

Day 4 Rasdhoo Atoll

Schooling fish and jacks at Rasdhoo attract numerous white-tip reef sharks. Madivaru is named for the abundance of manta rays seen here (Madi means manta ray in the Maldivian language Dhivehi) and depths range from 25 feet to almost 100 feet, making the dive particularly interesting and varied. Manta rays are attracted to Madivaru because of the strong currents that form a whirlpool effect in the deeper parts of the site, where the manta rays can hover over the currents. You will also find several cleaning stations located around Madivaru. Snorkelers should have great views of the cleaning stations near to shore, which are frequented by numerous fish along with the mantas and several species of shark. In the afternoon, step ashore on a tiny uninhabited island to relax on the soft, white-sand beaches, or for a bit of beachcombing. After dinner, attend a thrilling Bodu Beru drum and dance performance.

Days 5 - 7 Ari Atoll

Spend three full days exploring along Ari Atoll, one of the largest natural atolls of the Maldives. North Ari Atoll is famous for sharks, manta rays, and other pelagic fish, including the elusive whale shark. South Ari Atoll differs from many other areas in the Maldives and features many thilas (submerged pinnacles) both inside and outside the atoll lagoons, which act as sites of marine aggregation, making for wonderful snorkeling and diving both in and around the pinnacles and in the kandus (channels). Depending on weather and tide conditions, here are a few of the

sites we hope to visit. Maamigili Beyru - Nearly seven miles of reef stretches along the south of Ari Atoll, where whale sharks often congregate to feed and where juvenile whale sharks can be found year round. While sightings are not guaranteed, we will make every effort to locate these massive, yet elusive creatures. Rangali Madivaru - One of the best manta cleaning stations in the Maldives during the north east monsoon (December - April), this long stretch of reef starts at 26 feet and goes down to a sandy bottom at 78 to 98 feet. This area is teeming with cleaner wrasse, moray eels, leaf scorpionfish, and lionfish. Mantas frequent the area after feeding and this is a great site for both snorkelers and divers to get photos of mantas at shallow depths, with good light. Rahdhiga Thila - This beautiful pinnacle impresses the second you descend to 100 feet where you will find numerous gray reef sharks. The pinnacle overhangs are covered with beautiful blue, yellow, and orange soft coral, while table-top can be found near the surface. Broken Rock - Named for a large broken rock at the center of this dive site, Broken Rock is home to a beautiful array of soft and hard coral formations that attract a wide variety of reef life. There is an interesting swim-through for divers where the rock is broken. Common sightings here include the pufferfish, triggerfish, moray eels, and Napoleon wrasse. Kudarah Thila - Declared a Protected Marine Area by the Maldivian government, Kudarah Thila is a popular dive site that enjoys many incoming currents. Coral reef formations here are bright and colorful, including a variety of soft and hard corals. Consisting of four pinnacles, which can be all visited in one dive, a swim-through at the south-east corner of the dive site makes this a particularly popular dive, as does the rich variety of marine life, which typically includes trumpetfish, snapper, gobies, dartfish, Oriental sweetlips, and groupers. A little further away from the reef,

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divers are likely to see gray reef sharks, Napoleon wrasse, and sea turtles. Snorkelers will enjoy multiple excursions from the dhoni or from sandy beaches to discover placid lagoons, fringing reefs, and giris—submerged coral and rock patches. Keep an eye out for black- and white-tipped reef sharks, schooling fish, several species of sea turtles, manta rays, and numerous species of corals.

Day 8 Vaataru Atoll

With only one channel, one island, and a few sandbanks, Vaataru Atoll provides a sense of utter remoteness. Relish the luxury of isolation as you explore Rakheedhoo Corner, a deep channel with caves and stunning overhangs that are swarming with white- and black-tipped reef sharks, barracudas, and, with luck, hammerhead sharks. Another great site lies ahead this afternoon at Vaataru Kanduu, noted for its soft corals, crinoidae (feather coral), and plentiful fish and rays. There is also a sand bank and small deserted island for some relaxing beach time.

Days 9 - 10 Vaavu Atoll

The smallest and one of the least commercialized atolls in the Maldives, Vaavu Atoll offers superb sites for both snorkelers and divers alike. The warm waters are teeming with fish and larger marine life, which you will discover on a number of excursions over the next two days. Fotteyo Kanduu is considered, by some, to be one of the best sites in the Maldives due to currents that bring a large diversity of fish life looking for food. This narrow channel entrance is covered in colorful soft corals and leads to a pinnacle in the middle of the channel. Search the blue for eagle rays, gray reef sharks, white-tip reef sharks, tuna, barracuda, and the occasional hammerhead. Bodu Miyaru Kanduu, or 'Big Shark Channel,' is another top site and features small caves, numerous overhangs, and a slope covered in hard

coral and soft coral.

Day 11 South Malé Atoll / Disembark / Malé

Enjoy one final snorkel excursion this morning. Disembark in Malé and check in to Hulhule Island Hotel with the afternoon at leisure to relax. Or, join a half-day tour of Malé, the Maldives' buzzing island capital—a mélange of high-rise buildings, lively markets, and busy streets. This evening, enjoy a farewell dinner at the hotel, then transfer to the airport for your independent homeward flight.

Please Note:

Below please find the day-by-day itinerary for this expedition. Unless otherwise noted, daily excursion options are included in the cost of the trip. We do our best to adhere to the scheduled itinerary, but in the spirit of our expeditionary style of travel we may deviate slightly to take full advantage of encounters with the destination and its people, culture, and wildlife. Based on the expeditionary nature of our trips, there may be ongoing enhancements to this itinerary.

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YOUR SHIP: EMPEROR SERENITY

YOUR SHIP:	Emperor Serenity
VESSEL TYPE:	Small Ship
LENGTH:	131 feet
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	26
BUILT/REFURBISHED:	2016

· Four decks of guest facilities. – Sun Deck – large open space with deck chairs available. – Upper Deck – guest staterooms, bridge, and outdoor seating. – Main Deck – guest staterooms, open-air restaurant, lounge, and small library. – Lower Deck – guest staterooms. · Stairs connect the decks (no elevator). · The bridge may be visited upon request, contingent upon weather and navigation conditions. · Smoking is allowed on the Sun Deck only. CABINS · All staterooms have two lower beds—one double and one twin. · Lower Deck category 1 staterooms range from 88 - 145 square feet, with portholes. · Main Deck category 3 staterooms 232 and features large windows. · Upper Deck category 2 staterooms range from 188 square feet and feature large windows. The category 1 stateroom is approximately 117 square feet with a large picture window. · All staterooms have: a hair dryer, closet for storage, European-type outlets (two round sockets) at 220 volts, and individual air-conditioning controls. DINING · The restaurant accommodates all guests at one seating. · Special dietary requests (except Kosher) can be fulfilled with advance notice. · Coffee and tea are available 24 hours a day. SERVICES · A dhoni (traditional vessel), a small tender for diving, snorkeling, and excursions ashore, and a spa. ·

Weights and tanks are provided onboard. Snorkel and diving equipment, including masks, fins, BCDs, and wet suits are available to rent for a fee. Please contact us in advance if you would like to rent equipment onboard. · Laundry services are not available onboard, however arrangements for having laundry washed ashore may be possible. · The U.S. Dollar is the currency used on board. U.S. Dollars, Euros, U.K. Pounds, and credit cards are accepted for payment of



shipboard accounts.

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PRICING



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