

# EXCEPTIONAL



## Maldives Itinerary Trip Preparation Information

Below is valuable information which will help make your dive trip more enjoyable.  
If there are questions not covered below, please contact Explorer Ventures.

Photographs and vessel layouts are available online at [www.explorerventures.com/maldives](http://www.explorerventures.com/maldives)

### THE VESSEL

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- 20 guests
- 10 air-conditioned rooms with private bath & showers
- 220 V outlets in bath & near bed
- 1 adapter per room, no converters

The *M/V Carpe Vita Explorer* comfortably accommodates 20 passengers in 10 very large double staterooms, all of which have private bathroom facilities and can be configured to accommodate a couple or two singles. The staterooms are located on three of the vessel's four decks. The topmost deck is the sun deck which offers both shaded and full-sun areas for relaxation as well as a hot tub. The upper deck includes the al-fresco dining area, the bar, staterooms 1 & 2, a small lounge area and the bridge.

The large main deck contains the air-conditioned dining and lounge area, TV viewing area with DVD/CD music system, forward outdoor seating area, common restroom, staterooms 3 & 4, galley, camera charging station and a large camera table. There are two sets of stairs accessing the swim platform where two in-water ladders hang for easy access to and from the water for a refreshing swim when the vessel is at anchor. Staterooms 5-10 are located on the lower deck, accessed via stairs from the main deck.

The *Carpe Vita Explorer* is also equipped with a telephone for incoming and outgoing calls worldwide (additional charges apply). Cellular phone and internet access is available when in proximity to some of the islands if your phone is so equipped. Internet cards and cellular phone cards are available for purchase on board. The *Carpe Vita Explorer* has two computers for guest use as well as USB connections for a personal computers. Internet access is available at an hourly charge. The vessel's location does determine reliability of access to the internet.

HD media players along with a small selection of movies and music are available for guest use in each stateroom.

### DIVING CONDITIONS

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- Water temps average 80-85° F (27-29° C)
- Visibility 50-100+ feet (15-30+ meters)
- Water entry from a large custom dhoni (dedicated tender)

The weather in the Maldives is tropically pleasant with a year-round sea breeze. Air temperatures range from lows around 78° F (26° C) to highs in the high 80s and low 90s. There are two distinct but mild monsoon seasons in this equatorial country and each is named after the prevailing wind direction during that time of year. The northeast monsoon runs from December to April and brings relatively consistent, fair weather, but also often brings significant currents. The southeast monsoon from May through October brings a bit more wind and occasional rain (usually short-lived), but generally not as much current.


The vessel's itineraries are designed to take advantage of the changing conditions and to take divers to the best diving areas for the different seasons. The visibility is usually at its peak in December and January — sometimes well over 100 feet (30 meters)! Mantas can be seen throughout the year with the best feeding-station encounters typically during the May to November timeframe. Whale sharks are also seen most every month of the year, with the highest concentration seen in the monsoon transition months of April, May, October and November. The water temperatures remain a toasty 80-85° F (27-29° C) throughout the year. Most divers are comfortable with a 3mm wetsuit.

### DIVING LOGISTICS

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- Up to 4 dives offered daily
- All diving is done from the large dhoni
- Drift diving is the norm

All of the dives aboard the *Carpe Vita Explorer* are offered at scheduled times, up to 4 times daily including 1-2 night dives per charter. This is to allow adequate surface intervals, provide the option for guided dives on as many sites as possible, and to allow the vessel to travel on a schedule to different locations. Please note that Maldivian regulations limit the maximum depth for all dives to 100 feet (30 meters). Given the prevalence of drift diving in the area, your dives will be done from a large custom-built diving



dhoni (tender). This is no ordinary tender! The dhoni is 61 feet long and has ample space for all divers, cameras and gear. There are individual gear bins for each diver, separate camera and wetsuit rinse tanks and a bathroom with toilet and hot water shower plus two fresh water showers on the dive platform. Both the air and nitrox compressors are on the dhoni as well. On one of the evenings of the trip, a barbeque on a deserted beach is offered (weather permitting). The crew prepares a remarkable feast for this very special evening, and if you're lucky, may entertain you with some traditional song and drum playing.

## MINIMUM AGE RESTRICTIONS

- **Under the age of 15 must dive with parent/guardian**

The minimum certifiable age for divers is 10 for most scuba certification agencies; normally, the agencies restrict 10- and 11-year-olds to a maximum depth of 40 feet (12 meters). Explorer Ventures therefore allows children as young as 10 years to participate in our trips, with the following restrictions:

1. All children under the age of 15 must travel and dive with their parent or guardian, unless undergoing active training with an instructor.
2. Our itineraries offer very few diving opportunities at depths less than 40 feet (12 meters); diving opportunities for 10- and 11-year-olds will be significantly less than those for older divers. **For this reason, a minimum age of 12 for divers is strongly suggested.**

## SAFETY STANDARDS

To ensure your safety, we require the following of all divers:

1. All divers must be certified as openwater scuba divers by an internationally recognized certification organization.
2. All divers should have logged at least 1 dive within the 12 months prior to boarding the vessel, or are encouraged to participate in a refresher course on board.
3. All divers must adhere to the buddy system.
4. All divers must log in and out of the water with a member of the diving staff.
5. All divers must have a submersible console including SPG and depth gauge, timepiece or dive computer with these functions.
6. On night dives, a cyalume lightstick or marker beacon must be worn by each diver.
7. Decompression diving is not allowed under any conditions. The maximum allowed depth is 100 feet (30 meters).
8. Diving activities must cease when the consumption of alcohol begins.
9. Please note that due to a combination of staff and equipment logistics, insurance requirements and local diving regulations, neither rebreathers nor diver propulsion vehicles (DPVs) may be used aboard Explorer Ventures' vessels.
10. DAN (Diver's Alert Network) membership and dive accident insurance or equivalent is required. If you arrive without proof of a policy, you'll be required to purchase a short-term policy

valid for the duration of your stay in the Maldives for US\$20 (subject to change).

## WHAT TO BRING

- **Note weight restrictions**
- **Soft luggage for easy storage**
- **Very casual attire, special attire for visiting Male**
- **All linens, soaps and shampoo are supplied**
- **Hairdryers are available on board**
- **Note prohibited items**

If your trip requires a commuter flight in the Maldives, please note that the baggage allowance is 25 kg (55 pounds) per passenger. The excess charge is MVR 12.00/per kg + tax (approx. \$0.36/pound) and is subject to change.

Packing for a liveaboard trip is much easier than packing for a land-based vacation. Dress aboard the vessel is very casual. The climate doesn't require much more than shorts, T-shirts and swimsuits. Please bring at least one set of more modest clothing for visiting the town of Male. In town, local custom dictates that the body be covered from at least the shoulders to the knees, with short sleeves being preferable to sleeveless tops.

Soft luggage is recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. Sunscreen, sunglasses and a visor or hat is strongly recommended. In case of rough weather or if you have a tendency toward seasickness, come prepared with motion-sickness medications or Transderm patches from your doctor. Feel free to bring your favorite CDs and DVDs.

All linens (including sheets, comforters, bath towels, hand towels, dive towels and wash cloths) are provided on board. Soaps and shampoo are provided and hairdryers are available on board.


If possible, pack your regulator, dive computer, mask, certification and dive insurance cards, swimsuit, change of clothes and necessary medications and toiletries in your carry-on bag. Having these items will make an unexpected luggage delay far more bearable.

There is a long list of items which are prohibited in the Maldives. This includes but is not limited to firearms, narcotics, alcohol (including for personal consumption), pornography, pork products and religious idols (except for personal use). Bags are routinely searched by customs agents upon arrival.

## EQUIPMENT LIST

- **Bring your application/liability release forms**
- **Certification card**
- **Rental equipment is available on board (please indicate need on application)**
- **DAN or other dive accident insurance card**

The vessel provides tanks, hard weights and weight belts for your



use. If you prefer to rent the rest of your equipment from us, we have all of the equipment that you will need. Please indicate on your application form what equipment you will require. Otherwise, the following items are the diver's responsibility:

- Certification card & proof of DAN dive accident insurance
- Diving log book and dive computer manual (strongly encouraged)
- Mask \*
- Snorkel \*
- Fins \*
- Booties (if you wear them)
- Buoyancy Control Device (required) \*
- Regulator w/alternate air source \*
- Submersible pressure and depth gauges (required)\*
- Underwater time piece (required)
- Dive light \*
- Wetsuit – 3 mm to 5 mm \*
- Repair kit w/ spare parts
- Safety sausage

\* Available for rent on board

## ARRIVAL

- **Passport required**
- **Valid return airline ticket**
- **30-day free free tourist visa issued at airport**
- **Arrival the day before is encouraged**
- **Transfer costs are included**
- **Arrangements are made to pick you up**
- **Meet at the airport information counter at 2:30 pm for a 3:00 transfer by dhoni**

The airport code for the international airport in the Maldives is MLE. Please note that a passport is required of all visitors arriving in the Maldives. A valid return or onward airline ticket is also required. All visitors to the Maldives are issued a free 30-day visa. Americans, Canadians and most other countries' citizens do not need an advance visa. If in doubt, please contact the nearest consulate. We encourage you to arrive at least a day early so you have a "cushion" if there are flight or luggage delays, and so that you arrive aboard refreshed.

Airport transfers on the day of embarkation and disembarkation are included in your package. Please meet at the airport information counter at 2:30 pm for a 3:00 transfer by dhoni to the Carpe Vita Explorer. All guests arriving on embarkation day will be met at the airport by a crew member. If you are arriving early, arrangements can be made for you to spend time at a local hotel for a small fee. You can also walk around Male or wait at the airport until pickup. The dhoni ride from the airport to the vessel is about 15 minutes.

## IF YOU ARE DELAYED

- **Call 1.800.322.3577 (US/Canada) or 011.96.0793.7790 (local cell)**

If you miss any of your flights and are not able to make it to the

*Carpe Vita Explorer* on schedule, please call the USA booking office at 1.800.322.3577 or the local contact's cell 011.96.0793.7790.

Notify the crew of your updated arrival time should you have that information, and where you may be reached in the meantime. The *Carpe Vita Explorer* will not leave port until after the last arrival on the day of departure.

## SAMPLE ITINERARIES

*Please note also that these itineraries are examples only, and will change depending on weather and logistics at the Captain's discretion.*

Days aboard *Carpe Vita Explorer* generally involve a cold breakfast at 6:00 am followed by a first morning dive, full breakfast, second morning dive, lunch around 12:00 pm, two afternoon dives with a snack in between and dinner around 6:30 pm (18:30). On the day or days when night dives are offered, dinner is typically around 8:00 pm (20:00).

Fishing is available aboard the *Carpe Vita Explorer*. Check with the crew when arriving for specific information.

### 10-night/11-day Itinerary – November-April North & South Male & Ari Atolls

**Sunday:** Male. Guests board vessel around 3:00 pm (15:00); captain's briefing, documents check; check out dive. Approximately 1.5-hour crossing from port to North Male.

**Monday:** North Male, 1 dive; North Ari, 3 dives.

Approximately 3-hour crossing from North Male to North Ari and approximately a 2-hour crossing time between site in North Ari. Night spent anchored.

**Tuesday-Wednesday:** North Ari, 4 dives daily. Night spent anchored.

**Thursday:** North Ari, 1 dive; South Ari, 3 dives. Night spent anchored.

**Friday-Saturday:** South Ari, 4 dives. Nighttime crossing to Vaavu, approximately 3.5 hours (as weather permits).

**Sunday:** Vaavu, 4 dives.

**Monday:** Vaavu, 3 dives; South Male, 1 dive. Approximately 2.5-hour crossing from Vaavu to South Male after third dive.

**Tuesday:** South Male, 1 dive.

**Wednesday:** Depart the vessel by 8:00 am.

*Due to the necessity of readying the vessel for our next cruise, we must strictly enforce the 8:00 am departure.*

### 7-night/8-day Itinerary – November - April North & South Male & Ari Atolls

**Sunday:** Male. Guests board vessel around 3:00 pm (15:00); captain's briefing, documents check; check out dive. Approximately 1.5-hour crossing from port to North Male.

**Monday:** North Male, 1 dive; North Ari, 3 dives.

Approximately 3-hour crossing from North Male to North Ari and approximately a 2-hour crossing time between site in North Ari. Night spent anchored.

**Tuesday:** North Ari, 4 dives. Night spent anchored.



**Wednesday:** North Ari, 1 dive; South Ari, 3 dives. Night spent anchored.

**Thursday:** South Ari, 4 dives. Nighttime crossing to South Male, approximately 4.5 hours (as weather permits).

**Friday:** South Male, 4 dives. Night spent anchored.

**Saturday:** South Male, 1 dive.

**Sunday:** Depart the vessel by 8:00 am.

*Due to the necessity of readying the vessel for our next cruise, we must strictly enforce the 8:00 am departure.*

## **10-night/11-day Itinerary – May - October**

### **North Male & Ari, Baa & Raa Atolls**

**Sunday:** Male. Guests board vessel around 3:00 pm (15:00); captain's briefing, documents check; check out dive. Approximately 1.5-hour crossing from port to North Male. Cross to North Male from port approximately 2.5 hours, 1 dive. Nighttime crossing to Baa Atoll, approximately 4 hours (as weather permits).

**Monday-Tuesday:** Baa, 4 dives daily, nights spent anchored.

**Wednesday:** Baa, 1 dive; Raa, 3 dives. Night spent anchored.

**Thursday:** Raa, 1 dive; Baa, 3 dives. Night spent anchored.

**Friday:** Raa, 2 dives; North Ari, 2 dives. Approximately 3.5-hour crossing from Raa to North Ari after second dive. Night spent anchored.

**Saturday:** North Ari, 4 dives. Night spent anchored.

**Sunday:** North Ari, 4 dives. Night spent anchored.

**Monday:** North Ari, 2 dives; South Ari, 1 dive; North Ari, 1 dive. Approximately 3.5-hour crossing from North Ari to South Male. Night spent anchored.

**Tuesday:** North Male, 1 dive.

**Wednesday:** Depart the vessel by 8:00 am.

*Due to the necessity of readying the vessel for our next cruise, we must strictly enforce the 8:00 am departure.*

## **7-night/8-day Itinerary – May - October**

### **North Male & Ari, Baa & Raa Atolls**

**Sunday:** Male. Guests board vessel around 3:00 pm (15:00); captain's briefing, documents check; check out dive. Approximately 1.5-hour crossing from port to North Male. Cross to North Male from port approximately 2.5 hours, 1 dive. Nighttime crossing to Baa Atoll, approximately 4 hours (as weather permits).

**Monday-Tuesday:** Baa, 4 dives daily. Nights spent anchored.

**Wednesday:** Baa, 1 dive; Raa, 3 dives. Night spent anchored.

**Thursday:** Raa, 1 dive; Baa, 3 dives. Night spent anchored.

**Friday:** Baa, 2 dives; North Male, 2 dives. Crossing from Baa to Male approximately 4.5 hours. Night spent anchored.

**Saturday:** North Male, 1 dive.

**Sunday:** Depart the vessel by 8:00 am.

*Due to the necessity of readying the vessel for our next cruise, we must strictly enforce the 8:00 am departure.*

## **MEALS**

- **Please list on the application form any dietary needs you have**
- **Beer & wine with dinner included**

Aboard the *Carpe Vita Explorer* evening meals and lunches usually consist of vegetables, rice, pasta, soup, chicken, beef or fish with occasional local specialties offered as additional options. Breakfast is the usual fare of eggs, beef bacon, pancakes, French toast, potatoes, cereal and fresh fruits.

If you have any dietary restrictions or requests, please indicate them on your application form. Please note that specific brands of drinks, dressings and foods are often unavailable in the Maldives and that it can be very difficult for us to find low-fat or soy products, fresh fruit, shellfish and other items common elsewhere. Pork and pork products are not served aboard. While we will do our best to accommodate your requests, please be realistic and consider bringing some of your own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk.

All soft drinks, packaged juices, drip coffee, tea and water are included. Two glasses of beer or wine during the evening meal are included in your package price. Due to the difficulty of importing alcohol into the Maldives, additional beer or wine or freshly made juices or any hard liquor will be added to your onboard bill.

## **CURRENCY**

- **US dollars are widely accepted**
- **Most major credit cards are accepted**

In the Maldives, US dollars (cash) and credit cards are widely accepted, as are euros, although change may be given in the local currency, the Rufiyaa. Be aware that obtaining foreign currency in the Maldives is very difficult, although currency exchange is available at banks in Male and at the airport. Only US dollars and euros are accepted on board.

## **DEPARTURE**

The *Carpe Vita Explorer* arrives at its final destination port on the afternoon of the day prior to disembarkation. An optional visit to the city of Male is offered on the final afternoon for itineraries ending near Male. Passengers spend the final night and have disembarkation day breakfast on board. There will be sufficient time to catch a flight out at any time on the day of disembarkation. The dhoni will take you and your luggage to the airport after breakfast (or earlier if you have an early flight). If you have a flight late in the afternoon or in the evening, the airport hotel offers luggage storage and pool/beach/shower use for the day for a fee. If you'll be staying at one of the outlying resorts after the charter, the dhoni will take you back to the airport so you may meet your resort's transfer boat.



## ONBOARD CHARGES

- Major credit cards are accepted on board
- Traveler's or personal checks are not

Though all meals, most beverages, transportation between islands and much more has been taken care of with your trip payment, there are additional items which you may charge to your onboard bill. These include retail items, incoming and outgoing telephone calls, scuba instruction, rentals, nitrox, port/hotel tax and crew gratuities.

Your bill may be paid at the end of the trip using Visa, Mastercard, American Express or cash (US dollars or euros). Personal or traveler's checks are not accepted on board, and we are unable to provide cash for credit card charges more than invoice amounts.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- Vital messages may be passed to guest by calling the booking office at 1.800.322.3577
- Internet access is available aboard

The local agent for *Carpe Vita Explorer* can be reached from North America via phone at 011.96.0793.7790, and will be able to contact the vessel. Outgoing calls may also be made. Please be aware that a charge is assessed for both incoming and outgoing calls. Cellular phone and internet access is available when in proximity to some of the islands if your phone is so equipped. Internet cards/access and cellular phone cards are available for purchase on board. The vessel's location does determine reliability of access to the internet.

## CREW GRATUITIES

Crew gratuities are not included in your package. The crew works very hard, 7 days a week and many weeks at a stretch to provide the best possible service for our guests. The industry standard for crew gratuities on dive trips (if of course you are happy with the service which you have received) is between 10% and 15% of the package price per passenger. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

## PACKAGES INCLUDE

- 7 nights/8 days or 10 nights/11 days aboard vessel
- 3 meals daily, plus snacks
- Up to 4 dives daily
- Use of tanks, weights and belts
- Airport transfers on the days of embarkation/disembarkation
- Non-alcoholic beverages and 2 glasses of beer or wine with dinner

## PACKAGES DO NOT INCLUDE

- Rental, instruction and retail charges
- Crew gratuities
- Dive accident insurance (required)
- Trip cancellation & dive insurance (recommended)
- Port/hotel taxes

## OVERVIEW

Additional items not covered in the package price include:

- Airline ticket to and from vessel
- Dive accident insurance
- Rental equipment
- Courses taken while aboard
- Retail items purchased aboard
- Crew gratuity (usually 10-15% of trip cost but is at the discretion of the guest)
- Port & hotel tax
- Per-person, per-night fee payable on board

*All prices are subject to change.  
Please call us if you have any questions.*

Vessel is locally owned & operated.

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**Have a wonderful trip aboard the *Carpe Vita Explorer*!**

## Explorer Ventures

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