# Alif Alif Atoll: islands, resorts and how to get there

Alif Alif Atoll

The best all-round atoll in the country for independent travellers, and the only strong one you can still only reach by boat.

CAPITAL ISLAND
**Rasdhoo**

ISLANDS IN TOTAL
**105**

INHABITED ISLANDS
**8**

RESORT ISLANDS
**10**

AIRPORT
**No airport - every arrival is by sea**

CURRENCY
**Maldivian Rufiyaa**

LANGUAGE
**Dhivehi, English widely used**

Complete travel guide - 2026 / 2027 Edition

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Your complete guide to Alif Alif Atoll

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Magic Maldives

The best all-round atoll in the country for independent travellers, and the only strong one you can still only reach by boat.

Created in 1984 by combining the northern part of Ari Atoll, the small Rasdhukuramathi Atoll and the isolated island of Thoddoo.

Many islands have been lived on since ancient times and hold remains from the Buddhist period, including Vajrayana Buddhist remains on Maalhos.

Rasdhoo has ferry links to Malé and to the other inhabited islands, and the local islands here have a long-established guesthouse scene.

## 1. THE ATOLL IN NUMBERS

| | |
|---|---|
| **Capital island** | Rasdhoo |
| **Islands in total** | 105 |
| **Inhabited islands** | 8 |
| **Resort islands** | 10 |
| **People** | 5,905 |
| **Airport** | No airport - every arrival is by sea |
| **Getting here from Malé** | 70-90 min by speedboat; public ferry about 3 hrs, twice a week |

North Ari is the atoll to pick if you want the Maldives independently and only have one atoll to choose. It has real guesthouse depth, small family-run properties rather than big blocks, and it is reachable entirely by boat.

## 2. GETTING HERE

Speedboats run daily from Malé and take 70 to 90 minutes. The public ferry is far cheaper but runs only twice a week and takes about three hours. There is no airport in the atoll, which keeps costs down and crowds thinner.

## 3. THODDOO OR UKULHAS

Thoddoo is the biggest guesthouse island in the atoll, with farmland in the middle and a long stretch of bikini beach on one side. Ukulhas is smaller, unusually well kept, and has a house reef you can swim to from the beach. Both take independent travellers happily.

## 4. DIVING

Rasdhoo Madivaru is the reason divers come. Early morning, on the outer wall, scalloped hammerheads

pass in open water. It is a deep, current-exposed dive and not a beginner site.

## 5. WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

8 inhabited islands in Alif Alif Atoll. These are the islands with guesthouses, shops, ferries and a community - not resorts.

- Bodufolhudhoo
- Feridhoo
- Himandhoo
- Maalhos
- Mathiveri
- Rasdhoo
- Thoddoo
- Ukulhas

## 6. RESORT ISLANDS

Each resort in the Maldives has its own island. These are the resort islands in Alif Alif Atoll, with the island name first.

| Island | Resort |
|---|---|
| **Bathalaa** | Bathala |
| **Halaveli** | Constance Halaveli |
| **Ellaidhoo** | Ellaidhoo by Cinnamon |
| **Gaathafushi** | Gaathufushi Private Island |
| **Gangehi** | Gangehi |
| **Kandholhudhoo** | Kandolhu |
| **Kuramathi** | Kuramathi |
| **Kudafolhudhoo** | Nika Island |
| **Velidhoo** | Velidhu |
| **Veligandu** | Veligandu |
| **Maayyafushi** | Voi Maayafushi |
| **Fesdhoo** | W Maldives |

## 7. WHAT IT IS KNOWN FOR

Thoddoo's farmland and long bikini beach, Ukulhas's recycling programme and house reef, and the dawn hammerhead dive off Rasdhoo.

## 8. WORTH YOUR TIME

- Thoddoo - the classic backpacker island, watermelon farms and a long bikini beach
- Ukulhas - a famously clean island with a house reef you can snorkel from the shore
- Rasdhoo - dawn dives with scalloped hammerheads off the atoll edge
- Mathiveri and Feridhoo for genuine quiet
- No airport at all, so no flight cost and no transfer stress

## 9. WHEN TO GO

January to April for visibility; hammerheads at Rasdhoo year-round at dawn

## 10. BEFORE YOU GO

Thoddoo and Ukulhas both have well-kept bikini beaches; elsewhere cover shoulders and knees. No alcohol on the islands. Thoddoo is a farming island as well as a tourist one, which is why it feels different from Maafushi.

## 11. COMMON QUESTIONS

### How do I get to Thoddoo from Malé?

By speedboat in about 90 minutes, or on the public ferry in around three hours. The ferry runs only a couple of days a week, so check the day before you plan around it.

### Does North Ari Atoll have an airport?

No. Every arrival is by boat, which is one reason it stays cheaper and quieter than atolls with a runway.

### Where can I see hammerhead sharks in the Maldives?

Rasdhoo, in North Ari, is the best-known spot. The dive runs at first light on the outer atoll wall and is for experienced divers only.

**Everything in this guide is bookable with local Maldivian operators.**

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