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

Gaafu Alif Atoll

Part of Huvadhu - one of the largest natural atolls in the world by area.

CAPITAL ISLAND
Viligili

ISLANDS IN TOTAL
82

INHABITED ISLANDS
10

RESORT ISLANDS
3

AIRPORT
Kooddoo (GKK)

CURRENCY
Maldivian Rufiyaa

LANGUAGE
Dhivehi, English widely used

Complete travel guide - 2026 / 2027 Edition

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Your complete guide to Gaafu Alif Atoll

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Part of Huvadhu - one of the largest natural atolls in the world by area.

Gaafu Alif is the northern half of Huvadhu, one of the largest natural atolls in the world by area.

It was created in 1962 when Huvadhu was split into two districts, and it took part in the breakaway United Suvadive Republic of 1959 to 1963.

Dhevvadhoo, in the centre of the lagoon, has many Buddhist remains, mostly low mounds left by ruined stupas, none properly excavated.

1. THE ATOLL IN NUMBERS

Capital island	Viligili
Islands in total	82
Inhabited islands	10
Resort islands	3
Airport	Kooddoo (GKK)
Getting here from Malé	no public ferry; fly to Kooddoo in about 65 min

Gaafu Alif forms the northern half of Huvadhu, an atoll so large that crossing it is a serious boat journey in itself.

2. GETTING HERE

No public ferry from Malé. Fly to Kooddoo, around an hour, then a boat. Budget properly for the internal transfer - Huvadhu is big.

3. WEATHER

The deep south gets more rain than the rest of the country and does not follow the usual "December to April" pattern. February to April is the more reliable window here.

4. RESORT ISLANDS

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

Island	Resort
Hadahaa	Park Hyatt
Maamutaa	Pullman

Meradhoo	Raffles
Funamaddoo	Robinson
Dhigurah	The Residence
Falhumaafushi	The Residence

5. WHAT IT IS KNOWN FOR

Huvadhu's sheer scale and deep channels, and reefs almost untouched by tourism.

6. WORTH YOUR TIME

- Part of Huvadhu, among the world's largest atolls
- Deep channels and big-fish diving
- Kooddoo airport

7. WHEN TO GO

The far south is wetter overall; February to April is the driest stretch

8. BEFORE YOU GO

Small guesthouse scene. Arrange transfers in advance - distances inside Huvadhu are large. No alcohol on the islands.

9. COMMON QUESTIONS

How big is Huvadhu Atoll?

It is one of the largest natural atolls in the world by area, split administratively into Gaafu Alif and Gaafu Dhaal. Crossing it takes hours by boat, so plan internal transfers carefully.

Everything in this guide is bookable with local Maldivian operators.

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