Vaavu Atoll: islands, resorts and how to get there

Vaavu Atoll

Close to Malé, genuinely quiet, and the easiest place in the country to snorkel with nurse sharks and stingrays from the beach.

CAPITAL ISLAND **Felidhoo**	ISLANDS IN TOTAL **19**
INHABITED ISLANDS **5**	RESORT ISLANDS **3**
AIRPORT **No airport - arrive by boat**	CURRENCY **Maldivian Rufiyaa**
LANGUAGE **Dhivehi, English widely used**	

Complete travel guide - 2026 / 2027 Edition

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Your complete guide to Vaavu Atoll

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Magic Maldives

Close to Malé, genuinely quiet, and the easiest place in the country to snorkel with nurse sharks and stingrays from the beach.

Vaavu is the smallest administrative atoll in the Maldives by population.

It holds Foththeyo, the largest reef in the Maldives and the easternmost point of the country.

It is close to Malé - roughly an hour by speedboat - and still genuinely quiet.

1. THE ATOLL IN NUMBERS

Capital island	Felidhoo
Islands in total	19
Inhabited islands	5
Resort islands	3
People	1,601
Airport	No airport - arrive by boat
Getting here from Malé	about 1 hr 10 by speedboat; public ferry about 3.5 hrs, three times a week

Vaavu is the smallest atoll in the Maldives by population and one of the closest to Malé, which is an unusual combination. It is the easy answer to "somewhere quiet but not far".

2. GETTING HERE

Speedboats take a little over an hour from Malé. The public ferry runs three days a week and takes about three and a half hours for a fraction of the price. There is no airport.

3. FULIDHOO

The main guesthouse island, and small enough to walk around in a quarter of an hour. Most evenings nurse sharks and stingrays come into the shallows by the jetty - you can snorkel with them straight off the beach, which is rare anywhere.

4. DIVING

Vaavu's channels are known for night diving. Alimatha and Miyaru Kandu draw nurse sharks and grey reef sharks in numbers after dark. These are current dives; go with a local operator who knows the tide.

5. WHERE PEOPLE LIVE

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

- Felidhoo
- Fulidhoo
- Keyodhoo
- Rakeedhoo
- Thinadhoo

6. RESORT ISLANDS

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

Island	Resort
Alimatha	Alimatha
Velifushi	Cinnamon
Cocogiri	Cocogiri
Dhiggiri	Dhiggiri
Kunavashi	NOOE

7. WHAT IT IS KNOWN FOR

Fulidhoo's evening nurse sharks and stingrays in the shallows, and Alimatha and Miyaru Kandu - two of the best-known night dives in the Maldives.

8. WORTH YOUR TIME

- Nurse sharks and stingrays in the shallows at Fulidhoo most evenings
- Alimatha and Miyaru Kandu - famous night dives
- Just over an hour from Malé by speedboat
- Fulidhoo, Keyodhoo and Thinadhoo take independent guests
- Small properties and few visitors - the opposite of Maafushi

9. WHEN TO GO

January to April; nurse sharks at Fulidhoo year-round

10. BEFORE YOU GO

Fulidhoo is small, walkable in fifteen minutes, and has a bikini beach. No alcohol on the island. It is one of the few places where a village still feels like a village rather than a tourism strip.

11. COMMON QUESTIONS

How far is Vaavu Atoll from Malé?

About an hour and ten minutes by speedboat, or roughly three and a half hours on the public ferry, which runs three days a week.

Can you see sharks from the beach in Fulidhoo?

Yes. Nurse sharks and stingrays come into the shallows near the jetty most evenings and can be snorkelled with from the shore.

Is Vaavu good for a quiet trip?

It is one of the quietest atolls that is still close to Malé. The islands are small, the properties are small, and there are far fewer visitors than in Kaafu.

Everything in this guide is bookable with local Maldivian operators.

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