MAGIC MALDIVES · TRAVEL GUIDE

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**	INHABITED ISLANDS **8**
FROM MALé **70–90 min by speedboat; public ferry about 3**	BEST MONTHS **January to April for visibility; hammerheads at**
AIRPORT **No airport — every arrival is by sea**	

Known for

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

About Alif Alif Atoll

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.

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.

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.

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.

Highlights

- 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

Getting there and getting around

Public ferry from Malé

From Malé: 70–90 min by speedboat; public ferry about 3 hrs, twice a week

On a local island

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.

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.