Dhiffushi, Kaafu Atoll: a complete island guide

Dhiffushi, Kaafu Atoll

The easternmost inhabited island in the Maldives, so it sees the country's first sunrise.

ISLAND
Dhiffushi

ATOLL
Kaafu Atoll

NEAREST AIRPORT
Velana International (MLE) - the atoll contains the country's main...

ATOLL CAPITAL
Malé

CURRENCY
Maldivian Rufiyaa

LANGUAGE
Dhivehi, English widely used

Complete travel guide - 2026 / 2027 Edition

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1. WELCOME TO DHIFFUSHI

The easternmost inhabited island in the Maldives, so it sees the country's first sunrise.

Three designated tourist beaches: North Beach for spotting stingrays, South Beach with sunbeds, swings and a beach bar, and East Beach for the sunrise. The reefs hold stingrays, sharks and turtles, and you can snorkel straight off the shore into the lagoon. Night snorkelling, diving, dolphin cruises and sandbank trips are all run from the island.

Tourism, run locally - the guesthouse sector is in local hands and supports the island through community-led work.

2. ESSENTIAL FACTS

Atoll	Kaafu Atoll (K)
Population	about 1,270 (2022 census, including foreign residents)
Size	about 950 m long and 200 m wide, roughly 22.3 hectares
Distance from Malé	37 km northeast of Malé
Atoll capital	Malé
Nearest airport	Velana International (MLE) - the atoll contains the country's main airport
Language	Dhivehi; English is widely understood where there are guesthouses
Religion	Sunni Islam. This is an inhabited island, so alcohol is not sold and modest dress is expected away from the tourist beach.
Currency	Maldivian Rufiyaa (MVR); US dollars are accepted by most guesthouses
Time zone	UTC+5, no daylight saving

3. GETTING THERE

Public ferry takes 2 to 3 hours; a shared speedboat takes 40 to 45 minutes and costs around USD 35.

Reaching Kaafu Atoll from Malé: 30-90 min by speedboat; public ferry from about 1.5 hrs.

4. HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Tourism here grew from 2009, after the government allowed guesthouses on inhabited islands.

5. WHAT THERE IS FOR VISITORS

Three designated tourist beaches: North Beach for spotting stingrays, South Beach with sunbeds, swings and a beach bar, and East Beach for the sunrise. The reefs hold stingrays, sharks and turtles, and you can snorkel straight off the shore into the lagoon. Night snorkelling, diving, dolphin cruises and sandbank trips are all run from the island.

6. HOW THE ISLAND LIVES

Tourism, run locally - the guesthouse sector is in local hands and supports the island through community-led work.

7. ON THE ISLAND

Health centre, school, mosques, harbour, ATM, fuel station and a football turf.

8. BEFORE YOU GO

These are inhabited Muslim islands. Cover shoulders and knees away from the designated bikini beach, which every tourist island here has. Alcohol is not sold on local islands; some guesthouses run an evening trip to a floating bar. During Ramadan cafés close in daylight hours.

Inhabited islands follow local rules rather than resort rules. Swimwear belongs on the designated tourist beach only, alcohol is not sold, and shops and offices pause for about fifteen minutes at each of the five daily prayers.

Bring cash in small notes. Card acceptance is patchy outside the larger islands, and not every island has an ATM.

9. WHEN TO VISIT

January to April for the calmest crossings

10. AROUND THE ATOLL

This island is part of Kaafu Atoll. The atoll guide covers every inhabited island and every resort island in it, how the ferries run, and what the atoll is known for.

Everything in this guide is bookable with local Maldivian operators.

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