Our tourism flourishes on the health of our environment and marine ecosystems

- His Excellency Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, President of Maldives
EDITORIAL

Editor
Thayyib Shaheem

Content Editors
Mariyam Sharmeela
Fathmath Shifa
Aminath Manal Musthafa

Layout & Design
Mariyam Sharmeela
Hassan Saeed

Contributors
Maldives Immigration
Musicians’ Union of Maldives

Photos
Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation
Cover Photo: Universal Resorts Maldives | Kurumba Maldives
Back Cover Photo: Summer Island Maldives

IN THIS ISSUE

04
World Tourism Day Messages

19
In Conversation with: Ahmed Jameel

23
Women in Tourism: Mariya Shareef

28
Rising Star: Hussain Shifaau

32
Artist Profile: Detune Band

36
Maldives Border Miles to offer free VIP services

39
Crunching Numbers

43
Local Cuisine
Tourism in the Maldives has evolved tremendously since its humble beginning 49 years ago. The industry has become the main driver of our economic growth with 28% of our GDP directly linked to tourism. The Covid-19 pandemic may have presented itself with unprecedented challenges, but it has certainly made us rethink the way we have been shaping our policies and conducting business.

It has taught us many lessons, including building back a better world post-Covid, one which supports a more sustainable and circular economy. Which is why this Tourism Day’s theme ‘Inclusive Tourism Growth’ is highly appropriate for the Maldives and is in line with the government’s vision to transition to a blue economy.

The first tourist arrival in October 1972 was a game-changer for the Maldives. The sheer hard work and determination of those early pioneers in the tourism industry has put a remote archipelago on the map; a small country that is now renowned the world over for its immense natural beauty as much as for its great sense of hospitality — a dream destination for many across the global.

Our tourism flourishes on the health of our environment and marine ecosystems. The lives and livelihoods of Maldivians depend on it. The success of our tourism industry is not only built on the foundation of nature, but also on the backs of our local communities. It is our responsibility to center our policies on high caliber sustainable goals to build a more resilient economy, to ensure the security of our people and to preserve our rich ecosystems that define our country.

On this World Tourism day, I would like to thank all who work in Maldivian tourism for their valuable contribution into transforming Maldives into the brand it is today. We must continue to stride forward to build an industry that is inclusive and leaves no one behind.

Thank you.
Greetings from the Ministry of Tourism.

Year 2020 was marked as the year that brought the global tourism industry to a near standstill. However, the last quarter of 2020 gave us optimism and inspiration from the tremendous determination, efforts and dedication of the tourism industry partners and the tourism growth trajectory. The Tourism Ministry team believed that together we can; and that when the going gets tough get going. Hence, on this World Tourism Day I wish to congratulate all our industry partners and employees for their support and engagement towards the Maldives tourism recovery that we are witnessing today. We are happy to note that last August Maldives tourist arrival numbers surpassed that of August 2019 by 3 percent.

The Maldives adopted a multisectoral unified approach to manage COVID-19 crisis and move on with the travel and tourism industry. The whole of government, whole of travel and tourism industry and the whole of community approach worked well. The Maldives has managed to continue its tourism industry with protocols and guidelines to provide commendable safety to tourists, employees and the community with minimum inconvenience.

Winning the “World’s Leading Destination 2020” award by World Travel Awards in 2020 is testament to the great strides that Maldives tourism industry has taken. This is an achievement that makes the forthcoming 50th Anniversary of tourism industry of Maldives even more special.

We are very positive that the Year 2022, Maldives’ Tourism Golden Jubilee Year will be very favorable for tourism and related investments in the Maldives. The 10th amendment to Maldives Tourism Act opens many golden opportunities for tourism and relayed new ventures.

As we face to our 50th Anniversary and beyond, it is important to pay heed to the global competition. Hence, we must ensure that “one island one resort” concept and their overwater developments, the Maldives’ landmark selling point and the attribute that gives a clear competitive advantage in the global arena is protected and further developed.

It is also important to diversify the tourism product to attract the mainstream markets and the niche markets. In this regard community based local tourism is to be further extended to inhabited islands to encompass the rich and diverse culture, heritage and biodiversity to our tourism product. This would also enable more Maldivians to get direct and indirect benefits of tourism.

Tourism industry’s employees have been instrumental in our tourism success. Hence, I wish to thank all the tourism businesses that invest in staff development and taking good care of the employees. At the same time, I call upon the few establishments who are not in par with the contemporary employee centered management to do so. The government will work hand in hand with the private sector for tourism sector human resource development and enhance the opportunities for Maldivians. It is also our aim to get more women engaged in tourism product ownership and employment.

We wish to thank His Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih for his continuous guidance.

Thank you all for your contributions to the “Success Story” of Maldives tourism.
The human desire to travel and explore is universal, which is why tourism must be open for everyone to enjoy.

So too must the many social and economic benefits that tourism brings be available to everybody.

World Tourism Day 2021 highlights the power of ‘Tourism for Inclusive Growth’.

By celebrating this day, we state our commitment that, as tourism grows, the benefits that come will be felt at every level of our broad and diverse sector, from the biggest airline to the smallest family business.

Today, we reaffirm our pledge that, as we move forward and work to build a more prosperous and peaceful world through tourism, we will not leave anyone behind.

It is a pledge that is both timely and necessary. The pause in international travel caused by the pandemic has made clear the relevance of tourism to our societies.

The economic and social impact has been felt far beyond the sector itself. And in many places, the most vulnerable members of society have been hit hardest of all.

Working for inclusive growth means getting everybody behind a better vision for tourism. Only this way can tourism’s restart reach the people and communities that need it the most right now and build the foundations for a better future for all.

I welcome all our Members, Affiliate Members, governments, destinations and businesses to join us in marking this day, celebrated as tourism’s importance to every part of our societies is more evident than ever before.
"Today marks the World Tourism Day. It is a crucial day for us, as we take a moment to acknowledge the social, cultural, political, and economic impact of tourism on the Maldives. Aligned with the goal of inclusivity, we at MMPRC have focused a lot on engaging with the local community as much as possible in our marketing campaigns.

During the past three months of July, August, and September, we have conducted 77 promotional and marketing campaigns, took part in 29 fairs and virtual events, hosted 08 roadshows, and invited 17 familiarization trips to the Maldives. We conducted these activities to maintain and strengthen our brand presence and promote Maldives as a safe haven for travelers during this time.

For instance, we held an international art competition this year to promote the Maldives through art, and empower the local art community. Artisans, craft workers, boat-builders, fishermen, farmers, tour agents, boat captains, tour guides and countless others are the people that make it all possible.

It is our goal to ensure that a diverse range of tourism stakeholders, from the most boutique resorts to the chic guest house, are given the equal opportunity to engage with the industry and collectively grow together.

After facing the greatest challenge for our industry last year, we saw the perseverance and strength that the Maldivians possessed. The revival of the Maldivian tourism industry and our success post-pandemic is not a result of one individual nor one stakeholder, it is a testament to the strength, will, and sacrifice of the entire tourism industry and beyond. This is the power of an inclusive tourism sector, and it is one we must celebrate and strengthen in the future."
I greet you all on this important occasion as we celebrate the World Tourism Day. We are celebrating World Tourism Day today at the critical period of Pandemic. But however difficult it is, we should never lose confidence in humanity’s capacity to overcome those challenges.

Maldives is known for its beauty, exotic lagoons, beaches and the warmth of its people. The isolated islands played a major role for Maldives to be able to operate the resorts during the pandemic. But it also sealed the importance of Tourism for the sustainability of our livelihood. And importance of distribution of wealth since the pandemic across the Globe not only affected our health but also economically, we all are impacted.

Maldives is set to celebrate 50 years of Tourism next year at a grand scale. We see the transformation of Maldives from an underdeveloped fishing village country to a developing nation with infrastructure and economic growth at a fast pace during last 50 years.

But during the 50 years of Tourism and 56 years of Independence of Maldives, the bitter truth is that although the whole economy and majority of the employment in private sector is directly and indirectly contributed by Tourism, the general perception of population on Tourism is that a “few are benefiting from the Tourism”.

This year’s UNWTO slogan for Tourism Day is very important to formulate our policies and strategic direction towards inclusive growth that is distributed fairly across society and creates opportunities for all to change the perception and to build harmony among the Tourism Industry.

President Solih is focusing on Tourism for Inclusive growth from beginning of his tenure since Home Stay Tourism is key pledge in Presidential Election Manifesto. President Solih believes in the principle that Resort owners and local island home should benefit from Tourism and should have the equal opportunity to get involved in Tourism business. Home Stay Tourism will be a transformation of Tourism in Maldives since there is no high-cost investment and inception of Tourism beds will increase exponentially in especially in remote areas of Maldives. This will give the opportunity to the Tourist who are students and low budget travelers to see Maldives and experience the rich culture and cuisine and see for themselves how human civilization has survived in these remote islands with their own culture and language.

In line with Inclusiveness growth, MITDC has commenced efforts to introduce heritage tourism in the Maldives. An international yacht rally www.maldivesyachtrally.com organized by MITDC is scheduled to be held on February 2022 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Maldivian tourism sector.

This Yacht Rally’s main objective is to find a way to introduce heritage tourism in the Maldives in a way it includes the heritage sites across the nation and the culture of Maldives by visiting 15 islands from five atolls in the yacht rally. Out of this, only four islands are uninhabited. The residents in the remaining islands which is included in the rally have been informed of it – noting that these islands would see economic developments subsequently.

The yacht rally has been named ‘Savaadheeththa Dhathuru’ based on the honor presented to Sultan Muhammad ThakuruFanau after he had driven out the Portuguese who ruled over the Maldives from 1558-1573. The rally’s theme in this regard is the life of Sultan Muhammad ThakuruFanau.

MITDC strongly believes that with the new amendments to the Tourism Act and Decentralization Act, the tourism industry of the Maldives will be further diversified, which will facilitate everyone in the industry to fairly gain equal benefits and opportunities.

Maldives has maintained a safe haven for visitors from all around the globe, which will be upheld and carried forward for generations to come.
We are celebrating the World Tourism Day of 2021 during unprecedented times. Due to the declaration of COVID-19 Pandemic last year, Maldives’ Tourism industry was brought to a standstill, which had massive social and economic impact in the country.

The theme of this year’s World Tourism Day is “Tourism for Inclusive Growth”. Celebrated on the 27th of September each year, it is the global observance day fostering awareness of Tourism’s social, cultural, political and economic value and the contribution that this sector can make towards reaching the sustainable development goals.

Tourism industry is the most integral pillar of our economy and the main contributor to GDP and development. As such, planning and facilitating the development of the industry within this context is a great responsibility for all of us. As we continue with the efforts of sustaining tourism industry from last year, it has given us the opportunity to build more resilience to ensure the stability and growth of our main industry.

MTDC was incepted by the government of Maldives on 9th April of 2006 with the aim of providing an avenue for the average Maldivian citizen to gain a direct benefit from our tourism industry. Our main objective is to share the benefits of resort development and ownership across the Maldives, giving an opportunity for inclusivity in the industry and Maldivians to participate in their exciting tourism industry. MTDC is a profitable company that the public could invest in, allowing them to be part of the industry.

MTDC is the only public company which enabled tourism developments and opportunities for the communities in the untouched northern and southern atolls of the country. We firmly believe in the importance of creating sustainable job opportunities for Maldivians. Our intention is to create better life conditions for the Maldivian families by providing long term and sustainable jobs which are designed to ensure development for those from the local communities.

MTDC envisions that with our strategies, it will create prospects for a wider distribution of wealth that is created by the tourism industry. With this mandate, MTDC will lead the way to the future of sustainable, self-sufficient, inclusive growth in the tourism industry, enriching the lives of Maldivians across the country.

As we approach 50 years of Tourism in Maldives, I convey my sincere well wishes and greetings to all the contributors who work tirelessly in our leading industry. On behalf of our corporation, we wish you good health and safety during these challenging times.
After a long period of doubt, fear and uneasiness, we are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Today, we are hopeful, more than ever, that we are on the road to recovery and that we will see travel return eventually to pre-pandemic levels. All this has been made possible by the unwavering hard work of our entire industry and local communities working as one. Most especially, our frontline heroes, because of whom we were able to open our borders and operate our hotels at a time of great turmoil. On behalf of MATI, I extend our sincerest gratitude to all of those who have made this possible.

The arrivals are increasing at a faster pace, and we are hopeful to return to our previous tourist arrival numbers and performance but we must remember that the pandemic has not just affected the tourism sector. It has impacted many other industries from small businesses to big corporations and as we sail towards a more normal way of life, we must redesign and rethink our strategies in order to ensure that we work together and grow together. We must lead our new business strategies in a manner to help others grow in parallel, leaving no one behind. Tourism with the breadth of opportunities that it offers, both in terms of our products and fields of employment, can and must lead by example for Inclusive Growth, by continuing to focus on ethical, integrated and sustainable development.

As we approach the Golden Jubilee, we must learn from the hardships that we have faced. The Tsunami and the pandemic have been amongst the most challenging times, but it gives me great comfort to see how resilient we become every time. It is indeed with the hard work from the entire industry working together as one. Together, we have persevered through the hard times and together we will rise above as one and grow.
Tourism is the largest and fastest growing industry in the Maldives. Being a nation with a small population we welcome both tourists and workers from rest of the world to meet the increasing demand of our industry. Our industry takes immense pride in the extensive range of inclusivity of individuals with different ethnicities, cultures, and socio-economic backgrounds who make up our team. The inclusivity of different individuals allows us to provide our exceptional service.

As with most countries, our tourism industry is integrally connected with the rest of the world. We are all different from one another in numerous ways and it is of the greatest significance that when the world is being reopened after COVID-19 that we welcome every unique individual with accepting open arms.

As we envision to become a benchmark for sustainable tourism development, we need to alleviate prejudices and promote unity through effectively celebrating inclusivity. Endorsing equality and cultural inclusivity is a top challenge that the entire world has been facing incessantly. Let us not act out of misunderstanding and trepidation, instead out of the principles of inclusion, diversity and consideration for all that will make our sector as well as our country inspiring.
The overall industry is Covid 19 compliant with minimum to little attention on customer services or hospitality. It is time to start seeing clients and customers in person in real time in the real world we are all trying to negotiate. Hospitality industry will and can rebound from the current situation. Looking forward for a fruitful year ahead to celebrate 50 years of Tourism in the Maldives.
Tourism is an integral part of our proud history, inseparable from the heritage, culture and society. I perceive Maldives Tourism Industry as a capable engine of our economic growth. By celebrating this day with theme Tourism for Inclusive Growth, we pledge that as tourism expands, it will feel the advantages at every level of our vast and diversified industry, from the Luxury branded Resorts to the tiniest family-owned business. The tourism sector has played a significant part in the Maldives’ economic development throughout the years. Certainly, a sustainable tourism development requires inclusive growth.

We have implemented one of the most open border policies in the world after COVID-19 shattered the global tourism sector. We have developed new strategies to reach our target number of visitors that is a million and we have good hopes of restoring the sector to its previous state.

The country has fully vaccinated approximately 98 percent of all tourism industry employees to reassure the COVID-19 health and safety for the visitors arriving to the Maldives. We must pay thorough attention to the COVID-19 guidelines and work for the betterment of our tourism industry allowing no uncertainty for the pandemic to affect us again.

The importance of recognizing and honoring the work of Maldives Domestic Marketing Companies (DMCs) in the steady development of visitor arrivals in the Maldives cannot be overstated. The tourism sector has rebounded at a slow pace, thanks to DMCs’ activities in partnership with global travel brokers.

Finally, my team and I would like to express our gratitude to the Maldives Government, Ministry of Tourism and Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), and my esteemed industry colleagues for their contributions and proactive efforts in promoting the country’s tourist interests first.
On this World Tourism Day, I would like to commend Maldivian Tourism Industry for the achievements, growth and sustainability that it has attained over the past many years.

Since the reopening of the Maldivian borders due to Covid, we have seen exponential growth, with further advancement forecasted for 2022.

As the President of the Association of Travel Agents (ATA), it is my responsibility to thank the executive committee and the general members for the support that has been given to ATA in advocating various policies during the trying times of Covid-19. Thus, ATA has also been a big contributor in numerous government and non-government efforts to provide parity in sustainable growth in the Maldivian Tourism Industry.

ATA believes that awareness occurs concurrently with ad vocation. Therefore, engaging in educating the public through various platforms and modes with regards to the Tourism Industry is the best way to involve all related parties for a mutually beneficial industry to the larger population of the country.

As we close in 50 years of Tourism in the Maldives, we believe that further advancement is in the horizon for the Maldivian Tourism Industry. I can assure that ATA will continue with its efforts, and are more than willing to contribute in any form necessary for sustainable and inclusive development in the Maldivian Tourism Industry.
Greetings of this very special day on behalf of the Maldives Freediving Association and the local freediving community. We are overjoyed that the country is closing to its 50th year of hospitality service to the world. Indeed, we are blessed with exquisite natural beauty more importantly our breathtaking marine environment. We take pride in sharing with the rest of the world with open arms. To travel is to discover.

I take this opportunity to welcome the world to discover and experience our wonder of a beautiful nation as well raising awareness of its perseverance to the generations to come. Our very hospitable culture and its survivability is linked to the natural environment which also drives our economy.

Let this day be a never-ending celebration leaving behind the struggles of the pandemic, adjusting, being and keeping safe. Hoping for our country to serve at its best again to a unified world leaving no one behind as we are here as a whole and unified to share and benefit from. While at it, hoping to see you below the pristine waters.
Tourism isn’t just about exploration, but experience too. The sounds that you immerse in create an experience unique from the rest. Just like the sound of the lapping waves, or the sound of the dancing palms, the ambience music creates – is something you take home with you.

Music and tourism has been woven together since the beginning of tourism in the Maldives. The tourism industry became the livelihood for many local musicians. It also gave them a platform to express their creativity, culture, language, and heritage.

This year’s World Tourism Day theme “Tourism for Inclusive Growth” reflects the importance of growth in every sector working closely with the tourism industry, including the music industry. With more people getting vaccinated, and tourist establishments reopening, there’s once again hope for all sectors working with the tourism industry to thrive together.

I speak for myself and my fellow musicians when I say that we miss performing live music and we miss working. Just like everyone else, we can’t wait to get some form of normality back into our lives.

We look forward to a better future post covid, and I wish the same for all that are celebrating World Tourism Day.
On World Tourism Day, we recognize the power and potential of tourism to advance prosperity and drive inclusive, sustainable development

- António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations
IN CONVERSATION
AHMED JAMEEL
CHEF DE CUISINE
THE Ritz-CARLTON MALDIVES, FARI ISLANDS

“Always be humble and teach the next generation of passionate individuals to grow as the feeling is so rewarding.”
Ahmed Jameel is a talented Japanese chef who had a very humble beginning in the tourism industry. A keen young man from Th. Madifushi, moved to K. Huua for education. His culinary endeavors started in 2004 when he completed an apprenticeship program in culinary from Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Hura. His first job in the industry was at One & Only Reethi Rah as a Commis Chef in 2005. Later he moved to Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Hura and was transferred to Four Season Houston, Texas, in the USA, which was a great turning point in his professional career. After a year in Texas, he returned and joined the pre-opening team at Four Seasons Landa Giraavaru. From there he again moved to One & Only Reethi Rah and got the opportunity to work for a year at the renowned Japanese restaurant Nobu, located in One & Only Cape Town South Africa. After spending 10 years in One & Only resorts, he moved on to join Huafafushi Maldives. He is currently working at The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands, as a Chef De Cuisine.

How did you get started in the hospitality industry? Tell us about your journey and how it has shaped you

I started my hospitality career as a culinary apprentice in Four Seasons Kuda Hura, which was a resort close to the island I was studying in. The first cuisine I learnt was Italian; then I moved to Japanese cuisine, which immediately became my favourite cuisine. So, I set out on a journey to discover and delve deep into the cuisine. The beauty of Japanese culture, fresh and flavourful ingredients and the people drew me even deeper into the cuisine. I was fortunate enough to have worked with renowned chefs like Chef Hiro, Chef Nori, Chef Andrew, Chef Don and various other Japanese Chefs and even had the opportunity to explore the cuisine closely in Japan itself. These experiences have prepared me for who I am today – managing the finest Japanese restaurants in the Maldives, Iwau at The Ritz-Carlton Maldives. I am extremely proud of the journey, people, and places it has taken me.

What made you to become specialized in Japanese cuisine? What is your signature dish?

After spending about three years in Italian cuisine, I met a Japanese Chef who mesmerized me completely by his artistry; the fine techniques in cutting ingredients and the skill of intricately garnishing dishes. I loved the style of everything about this cuisine, so I started working with him to master the skills.

I am working more on the hot and cold section these days; I love dishes that are made of Japanese Wagyu, which I believe is quite a beautiful ingredient to play around with.

What has been the most challenging part of being a chef?

I think becoming a chef is easy, but it requires dedication, time and energy, which most people give up during the early stages. It’s the foundation that needs to be built, and it’s the hardest phase; push yourself at the beginning of your career, and slowly but surely, you will build trust and confidence to get you through tough times in the kitchen. It’s all about passion, attention to detail, quality, and sometimes sacrificing personal time at times, but I believe it’s worth it in the end. When people taste my food and bring a different kind of joy, it brings me immeasurable pleasure.

What is your role at The Ritz-Carlton Maldives? What do you love the most about it?

I am working as the Chef De Cuisine at Iwau and Eau Bar. Iwau in Japanese means “to celebrate,” exactly honoring of the Japanese flavours with live cooking Japanese Chef’s Tables serving creative, fresh seafood and meat dishes set under the stars whilst Eau Bar is a sophisticated restaurant featuring plant-based and fresh seafood with a touch of Japanese.

The ambience is beautiful, but for me, the highlight is freedom of creativity here is boundless, allowing my team to create great results. I have people from different corners of the world working with me united by the same vision and mission. So, you see a lot of passion and energy.

What are the most important considerations for you when planning a menu for your guests?

In planning the menu, I consider creating dishes that cater for guests with different dietary requirements (health conditions, nutritional needs and religious restrictions). I prefer simple yet with full of flavors, and I believe in creating a bespoke experience for each and every guest, so I make it a habit to meet the guests and ask them about their preferences.

What has been the best comment you received so far from a guest?

I have received many heartwarming comments, most on TripAdvisor. My focus is always to reach the next level, to give guests an experience they have never had, which is a challenge as the guests we get has been around the world tasting the finest cuisine. I am content as long as guests are enjoying my food.

What are your thoughts and views on the Maldives tourism industry?

I think the Maldives has done such an amazing job in positioning the destination amongst the most luxurious destination in the world. It’s the welcoming culture of the people which has made the industry so successful.

What are your major concerns in this industry specially for local chefs?

Overall, we have started seeing more Maldivian chefs leading in some of the top resorts in the Maldives, which truly makes me proud. I think there is still room for more training, and more brands should conduct culinary apprentice programmes, which was how I started my career.
The Maldives adopted a multisectoral unified approach to deal with the crisis and move on with the travel and tourism industry

- Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Tourism
What is the driving force behind your success?

Personally, I embrace challenges and opportunities positively, which has helped me to grow. Secondly, I believe its passion and finding inspiration from my industry colleagues and mentors. Finally, I believe this industry brings so many people with such rich backgrounds together, opening a world of knowledge. Hence, every day I question how I learn something new, whether a management skill or the technical skill.

Who you look up to for inspiration and mentorship?

I have met so many people who have directly and indirectly inspired and enriched my experience in the industry. A few people who have really helped were Chef Andreas from Four Seasons, who gave unwavering support to grown and learned, Mr. Armando Kraenzling, Vice President General Manager from Four Seasons, who has been one of my biggest inspirations.

Chef Hiro and Chef Nori have taught me traditional and authentic Japanese cuisine and shared a world that I immediately fell in love with. Chef Charles, Chef Andrew and Chef Don introduced me to modern industry-disrupting dishes. Chef Ashish and Chef Brandi at Huvafenfushi taught me so much creativity. And Chef Joseph, who worked with me in two other resorts, introduced me to a different side of culinary.

Chef Nishantha, the Executive Chef at The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands and Mark Hehir, my General Manager, who was also a chef, have guided me and inspired me through my career. I had the opportunity to work with them in different resorts over the years.

What would be your best advice to the young locals entering this industry and aspire to be in leadership roles?

My advice is to embrace the challenges and opportunities fully and maintain a positive attitude and behavior. Follow your heart and passion; you will definitely achieve your dream. But one thing is being a leader is not just a fancy title; it comes with great responsibility but with the opportunity to create paths for others, so always be humble and teach the next generation of passionate individuals to grow as the feeling is so rewarding.

Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

I have worked in the industry for 17 years, and I have learnt a lot and still learning new skills every day. I would like to become an Executive Chef in one of the 5-star resorts in the Maldives, this dream feels quite close, and I dare to dream and push myself to achieve this.
WOMEN IN TOURISM

MARIYA SHAREEF (MARI)
RESORT MANAGER
SUMMER ISLAND MALDIVES

“Having women leaders at the top sets the right tone for the rest of the company to follow”
Mariya Shareef, commonly known as Mari, is an inspiring leader from the tourism industry. She is the youngest in a family of four. She did her first degree in Tourism & Hospitality Management in Malaysia and Masters in International Tourism Marketing in UK. Her interest in cooking lead her to the tourism industry as a kitchen assistant. Over the past 20 years she has been working in the tourism industry, filled various roles in different companies. From F & B to the front office, from public relations to marketing and business development. Her growth in the industry has been remarkable and outstanding. Currently she is the Resort Manager at Summer Island Maldives.

You have been working in the hospitality industry for nearly 2 decades. How did you get started?

My interest in the tourism industry started when I was in 10th Grade. I attended a job fair and got to interact with recruitment agents from resorts. Back then I was really interested in cooking, and I spent a lot of free time in the kitchen baking. I knew I wanted to do something that would allow me to indulge in my passion of cooking. Resorts were a natural fit.

Soon after graduation I joined Bandos Island Resort as a Kitchen Assistant. I spent most of my time in the pastry department doing prep work for the chefs. It was exactly what I wanted to be doing.

I took a break from work to get my diploma and I wanted to go back into the kitchen at a resort after graduation. Unfortunately, there were no openings available – kitchen jobs were hard to come by at the time. I finally settled on a front office job at Hilton, which was offered with the understanding that I would be able to transfer to the kitchen when there was an opening. However, when the opportunity to transfer to the kitchen came, I found I was not too keen to move. I enjoyed working in the frontline a lot more as I got to meet new people on a daily basis and every day was different. So, I continued to work in the front office.

While working at the front office I saw the sales and marketing side of the job, and after completing my degree I joined Crown & Champa Resorts as part of their sales and marketing team. After working there I moved around a bit, working in different companies and teams – exploring, learning and trying my hand at different areas. I even worked in a travel agency in Male’ and for a brief period moved away from the tourism industry altogether as well. But eventually I found my way back to tourism. After completing my Masters I worked at Lily Hotels’ marketing and public relations department before joining Kaimoo in 2013 as their Business Development Manager. At Kaimoo I was very closely involved with the pre-opening of Summer Island Maldives. I really enjoyed the frantic energy that goes with setting up a resort.

How would you describe your journey so far?

I started as the Resort Manager at Summer Island Maldives in 2016. Looking back, it seems like a natural progression, having been so closely involved with the pre-opening of the resort. However, at the time I was very nervous, doubting my ability to build and lead a team from scratch.

Like all journeys, my journey in the tourism industry had its ups and downs and I was not always sure of where I was headed. I took risks, explored, and challenged myself. I have always tried to maintain a positive outlook and tried to learn from any setbacks I encountered.

I try not to look at the glass ceiling above me but I do know there is one. Being a woman in an industry dominated by men has made me stronger. Often, I had to work twice as hard as the men to be recognized and to prove myself. I am very proud to be where I am today and I try to lead my team by example. I hope I am a source of inspiration for my team and for all the young women in the industry.

Walk us through a day at your job as Resort Manager at Summer Island.

My main role as the Resort Manager is to make sure that all the different teams and departments are working smoothly to deliver the best experience for our guests. A lot of cogs need to be working continuously around the clock to ensure this and my role is to make sure that everything is well-oiled and in working order.

Every day is different for me. I like to get a good breakfast with my morning coffee. I then have briefings with my head of departments followed by another one with the directors. The rest of the day depends on the events and activities going on. If there is a bigger project, I might have to pay more attention to that while simultaneously dealing with daily operations. A lot of my input is required into planning and strategizing for bigger themes and events. For example, right now we are preparing for the approaching festive period. I am involved in everything from brainstorming for a theme, to sourcing and ensuring that the required items arrive on time, to coordinating the various teams on the island for the festive period.

What are the biggest challenges you faced in this job?

My main responsibility is to ensure that we have an A-star team that is motivated and working together seamlessly. Creating a work culture that brings together a multi-cultural, multi-generational team that also lives on site poses its own set of challenges. I try to foster a work culture that is built on respect and service to others while celebrating our differences.

Covid has of course created its own set of challenges. I try to keep morale high, and my team motivated despite the fact that tourism is one of the hardest hit industries. Everyone on my team was suffering. Keeping up morale requires a very personal touch. Trying to understand the challenges each and every team member faces, while also keeping up with the resort’s operational needs has been challenging.
What has been your most memorable experience and valuable lesson from the tourism industry?

It is hard to pick a favorite from the many beautiful moments I have had at Summer Island. But if I have to pick one, I would say my most memorable experience is the first day I came to Summer Island Maldives after taking on the role of Resort Manager. I was young and had been tasked with leading a transformation. Naturally, I was worried about how I would be received by the team. It is funny to think how wrong I was. The staff welcomed me with open arms and supported me as I stepped into the role and instituted a new management style and work culture.

In terms of the most valuable lesson I’ve learned, it would be to never give up and to always look ahead. There have been moments where I felt like I failed, but it doesn’t stop me from taking on the next challenge. Especially as a woman in this industry, where we have to go the extra mile that’s never recognized, while simultaneously fighting against a society that still discourages women from working in the industry, it is inevitable to want to give up at some point. Finding the courage within me to keep going despite the challenges is empowering, and it was a valuable lesson to realize that I have it in me.

Hospitality industry is perceived as a male-dominated industry specially in leadership roles. What is the biggest factor that has helped you to be successful?

I am really fortunate to work in a company that encourages and empowers women to work at the top. They are a source of strength and inspiration - particularly our Chairperson, Moomina Haleem. Having women leaders at the top sets the right tone for the rest of the company to follow.

The directors at Kaimoo did not see my gender as a factor when they decided to hand me such big responsibilities, and they have always had my back and trusted me. I would like to thank them for the opportunity to prove myself.

I have also been blessed with the wonderful team at Summer Island and Kaimoo. They look up to me with pride and never look at me through a gendered and limiting lens. My family continues to motivate and encourage me every day. I know they will always help me if I fall.

I also think an important factor is the hard work I put in. I did not realize it back then but I had to work much harder than the men to get the same level of recognition. That definitely worked in my favor and instilled a sense of hard work in me that continues to pay off.

“Never be afraid to fail. Unless you try you will never know what you are capable of and what you can achieve”
In your opinion what is the most significant barrier for female employees, especially locals in this industry? What policies should we put in place to make it more attractive and welcoming for female leaders?

I think the biggest barrier to female employees in the tourism industry is cultural. Unfortunately, society still frowns upon women who want to work away from home. There has been a positive shift in attitude towards women working in resorts over the years but we still have a long way to go.

Of course, there is a lot that the tourism industry can do to support a more inclusive environment for female employees. These range from changing hiring practices to creating safe and welcoming work environments on resorts for women and men. The key here is to ensure that women are involved in formulating these policies.

The global travel and tourism industry is currently facing many challenges due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. How has business changed for your resort due to the pandemic?

Everything has changed. We have had to come up with new SOPs and change the way we interact with people. Tourism involves a lot of human interaction, personalized service and dealing with people day in and out. The pandemic has even forced us to come up with an alternative to the way we smile - the most basic and welcoming form of communication - while keeping our faces covered. We are slowly getting there and getting used to the new normal. It will take time but we are on the right path.

What are your thoughts and views on the Maldives tourism industry? What has been the most meaningful change since you joined the industry?

The industry has changed a lot in the past 50 years. For me, the most meaningful change that happened is that tourism is now more open than ever. Guesthouses on local islands, using locally grown and sourced products while also letting more and more local artists, musicians and crafters into the industry, has allowed more people to benefit from the tourism. This is the most meaningful change that I have seen in the industry. We still have a lot of work to do. Our environment is fragile. We need better implementation of environmental policies while simultaneously raising awareness on sustainable practices.

What is the driving force behind your success?

My team at Summer Island Maldives is the driving force behind my success. I am also lucky to have the support of my directors. They have encouraged me, lifted me up and stood beside me throughout my five years at Summer Island Maldives.

Who do you look up to for inspiration and mentorship?

For inspiration I always look up to my sister. She has always pushed me to take risks and always believed I was more than I imagined. I really owe a lot to her. She is my inspiration and my go-to person if I needed any advice, or for any encouragement. She is my guiding star.

I have also worked with so many remarkable and exceptional people throughout my career, and I have learned a lot from these people. Every person for me was different, and every experience was a stepping stone. I have been inspired by many, and from different levels, line level to CEOs and really wonderful MDs that I have worked with - and consider them all my mentors and I know I can approach them for advice anytime.

I would like to especially mention, Aishath Neena, our Executive Director at Kaimoo who recruited me, guided me and pushed me to be bold when I wanted to back down.

What would be your advice to the young women entering this industry aspiring to be in leadership roles?

Do not be afraid to seek advice and encouragement from the people who have been in the same place as you. They know of the struggles and challenges that you face and can help you find the right path. Never be afraid to fail. Unless you try you will never know what you are capable of and what you can achieve.

Don’t stop challenging yourself but also don’t be too hard on yourself. Give yourself a chance and you will see the amazing things that await as your journey unfolds.

Where do you see yourself in the next five years?

Five years in this role has taught me so many things, mostly enlightened me of my own strengths and weaknesses, I am proud to have been part of a transformational change here at Summer Island Maldives. It was a slow and steady journey for me, with setbacks and obstacles but I am very proud of where we are as a team. We still have a long way to go and I believe I still have a lot to contribute. So for now, I see myself continuing this journey with Summer Island Maldives and Kaimoo.
Working for inclusive growth means getting everybody behind a better vision for tourism Zurab Pololikashvili

- Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General World Tourism Organization, UNWTO
We need to look no further than right here in Maldives to find the best talents for our resorts and increase the number of Maldivians in the industry, especially in management levels.
Hassan Shifaau is a people person who gets along with people easily. Shifaau has been in the tourism industry for 13 years. He started his hospitality career from Herathera Island in Addu Atoll, after completing O’levels. While working he did a Human Resource Management and Strategic HR Leadership Course from E-Cornell University. Currently he is pursuing an HR Professional Certificate course from the Australian Institute. Over the past 13 years he has worked as HR Manager for Anantara Dhigu, Veli and Naladhu at MINOR Hotels. He has also worked at the St. Regis Vommuli, Anantara Kihavah, Cheval Blanc Randhei as well as the One and Only Reethi Rah. Today he is the HR Manager of Gili Lankan Fushi Maldives.

What was your first hospitality job?
I started my career as a bell boy at Herathera Island Resort.

Who and what inspired you to join Gili Lankanfushi Maldives?
I really liked the concept and brand image of the resort, and I think that is what inspired me to make the move to Gili Lankanfushi. Now I am here experiencing the culture and I love the place and the people here.

How do you manage your daily work schedule? What is the best part of the job?
I am an early bird and I make sure I’m in the office early morning. I get a head start to everyday, which is why I am able to manage my schedule easily. The silence of the morning inspires me to get ahead of my schedule and finish off whatever is pending, and also prepare myself for the day.

The best part of my job always is my daily rounds. Meeting my fellow team members, listening to their concerns, ideas and views helps me to get an idea of what needs to be done and also allows me to stay connected and on top of everything.

What has been your most memorable experience from the hospitality industry so far?
I think the highlight of my life in the hospitality industry thus far has been meeting my life partner through the industry.

What challenges do young people face related to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion?
I believe one of the biggest conversations when it comes to talking about diversity, equity and inclusion has to be the hesitancy of women to join the work force in the hospitality industry. While the percentage of women is certainly higher compared to what it was a decade or two ago, we still need more women to come forward. We need to create an environment where everyone feels safe, and to eliminate any negative preconceived views about women who choose a life in hospitality. We need to encourage more women to join the industry.

In addition to this, we need to foster local talent. We need to look no further than right here in Maldives to find the best talents for our resorts and increase the number of Maldivians in the industry, especially in management levels.

As an enthusiastic young professional, how would you describe the tourism industry of the Maldives?
The Maldivian hospitality industry is a place full of professionals and geniuses. You will never find a more dedicated workforce anywhere else. These hardworking resort staff are the backbone of this entire industry. Maldives would not be where it is today without the sweat and sacrifice of the resort workers.
Are you enjoying resort life? What do you like most about this industry?

I love resort life. It gives me the opportunity to meet new people or even reconnect with people I have known before. Working together in a resort creates a special bond, because we are experiencing life very differently from other people. We get to meet people from different parts of the world or even different parts of Maldives, and allows us to understand and learn about things in different perspectives — that is what I like most about this industry.

What do you miss most?

I miss my family and childhood friends the most, and homemade food. No matter where you go in the world, nothing will replace your mother’s cooking.

What would be your advice to young locals entering the tourism industry?

Be true to yourself and have faith. Do not give up when things get tough, instead face it and overcome the challenges, and you will achieve great things. And most importantly, remember to choose a boss who will help you and guide you.

Where do you see yourself in the next five years from now?

In the next five years, I see myself as a leading HR professional serving the country while at the same time creating a difference around the world. I want to be a mentor, so I see myself as a teacher, guiding and developing people. Obviously the hospitality industry would be where I want to create the most impact in, and I hope to be someone useful to the industry while doing all this.
With many millions of livelihoods in jeopardy, it is time to rethink, transform, and safely restart tourism

- António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations
Faathi
Hassan Fathih
LEAD GUITARIST / HARMONY VOCALIST

Faathi began his professional musical career in the year 2000. He is the band’s lead guitarist and his creativity and unique ideas always deliver the most inspiring musical guitar solos and fills.

Ammadey
Ahmed Asif
DRUMMER/HARMONY VOCALIST AND PERCUSSIONIST

Ammadey is the band’s drummer, is the heartbeat of the band. He started his professional career in the year 1999 and is one of the most expressive and authentic drummers the country has seen in this industry.

Fezu
Fathimath Fezeleen
SINGER / SONG WRITER / GUITARIST

Fezu is the female Vocalist and Acoustic Rhythm Guitarist of the band and a multi-talented artist with a lot of experience in the world of music. As a career, she started performing in the year 2003 and has proved to be a role model to many of the female Maldivian youth. She is well-known for her caring and friendly personality which is often portrayed in her songwriting and lyrics.

Ayya
Ali Shafiu
BASS GUITARIST / HARMONY VOCALIST

Ayya is the band’s bass guitarist, is a musical scientist keen on experimenting with new sounds and many more. He started his professional career in the year 2000. His wonderful grooves make the audience get on their feet every time we’re on stage.

Fuji
Ahmed Furqan
LEAD SINGER / SONG WRITER / KEYBOARDIST

Fuji is the band’s vocalist is also the youngest member of this family, but being the youngest hasn’t stopped him from proving his creativity. His well-written lyrics are the key to the band’s most well-composed songs. He started his professional career in the year 2005.

Founded in 2006, Detune band is one of the most famous and sought-after event and party band in the Maldives. For over a decade the band has been captivating their audience evolving over the years to bring the trendiest songs to the dance floor. They have also been playing resort music since their inception in 2006. The band performs a variety of diverse genres like funk, electric, acoustics, jazz, reggae, blues, classical and Maldivian music. The band consisting of five members - Fathimath Fezeleen, Ahmed Furqan, Hassan Fathih Abdul Gafoor, Ahmed Asif and Ali Shafiu represented Maldives at the ITB Berlin in the years 2007 and 2014.

Their first album ‘One Down’ was produced in 2014 - an album written and composed together by the members of the band. As part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR), the band has produced many songs such ‘Peace is Possible’, a theme song for Junior Chamber International Maldives (JCI), ‘Aafeshun’, an awareness song in tribute to cancer patients - a collaboration with the Cancer Society of Maldives (CSM), Autism Awareness Song - a song produced in collaboration with Imaduddin School and ‘Maaraamarin’ a song produced for Television Maldives (TVM) to battle gang violence in Maldives.

Detune band has been chosen as the composers and producer for the theme song for Maldives Tourism Golden Jubilee Year 2022.

Maldives Tourism Bulletin
NALA NALA RAJJE
The Official Theme Song for Maldives Tourism Golden Jubilee Year

From an unmapped archipelago
to the World’s number one tourist destination,
the story of Maldives is nothing short of a wonder
Comprising of over a thousand tropical islands
scattered across the Indian Ocean,
DhivehiRaajje
is an oasis of peace and beauty
with mesmerizing colors and shades.
The traditional tranquility of island life
with unique traditions and culture
combined with the warm hospitality
has made Maldives a must visit destination.
Maldives, our nala nala raajje,
welcomes you to a journey beyond your dreams.

Verse
We are the children of the sea
An ocean tribe the world has gotta see, gotta see
Shades of blue white and green
It’s a perfect place for you to be its a must to see
A must to see

Pre chorus
Life is warm where we are
We’re here for you, us the happy breed

Chorus
Nala Nala raajje
Catch the sun paint the sky with colors
Nala Nala raajje
Touch the fire flies floating on the sea
Nala Nala raajje
Watch a starry night or a silver moon
Nala Nala Nala Nala raajje

Bridge
Dive through the caves under water
There’s life in the sea
Tall are the palm trees waving with the breeze
While the birds are flying high
Down by the bay see the dolphins dance
You’d wish that you could stay for life
The magical wonders of earth

Chorus
Nala Nala raajje
Catch the sun paint the sky with colors
Nala Nala raajje
Touch the fire flies floating on the sea
Nala Nala raajje
Watch a starry night or a silver moon
Nala Nala Nala Nala raajje

Verse 2
You have been here before
Come join again, lets all rejoice
This 50 years. Our 50 years
The bliss we feel of our golden day
This jubilee we celebrate
With you today. With you today
“Music, like tourism, brings people together and connects cultures

- Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General
World Tourism Organization, UNWTO
Maldives Border Miles to offer free VIP services

By: Miithah Mohamed

Will you be mesmerized to have access to the most luxurious lounge in the Maldives for free?

On World Tourism Day 2021, Maldives Border Miles announced one of the grandest offers to its members. The program being the world’s first of its kind, this massive news will be another reason why you should be choosing Maldives over other destinations. While most of the travelers were thinking of a valuable reason to convince their instincts on deciding their holiday destination, the introduction of free VIP services will be the answer and another reason why Maldives could be the perfect choice.

With just nine months past after the commencement of the program on 1st January 2021, this additional premium reward of free VIP services will be offered to the Abaarana members of the Maldives Border Miles. Abaarana is the Gold Tier of the Program and the members shall earn four-thousand points to attain this privileged Tier.

The word ‘Abaarana’ itself describes the honor, as it is an honorific name given to monarchs during the ancient times of the Maldives, and perhaps this additional reward has made it the ‘cherry on top of the cake,’ offering the attention and privileged status which our loyal visitors deserve.

The VIP service will allow the eligible members to unwind in the Maamahi Executive Lounge where they will have access to plenty of refreshments, a mini duty-free shop, and wi-fi. From the time the traveler step off the plane, the customer service team will take care of the passport and luggage clearance, also arranging your belongings to be transported directly to the destination, whether it’s a resort, liveaboard, or private island.
Register now and stand a chance to win an all-inclusive holiday

There is no better time than now to register for the Maldives Border Miles, as you stand a chance to win a holiday retreat, far away from other hotels. Located in Raa Atoll, northern Maldives, the resort is just 20 minutes by speedboat from Ifuru domestic airport, or a 45-minute, scenic seaplane ride from Velana international airport. A first of its kind, You & Me Maldives’ stand out feature is a fully submerged, underwater restaurant that gives diners a view of the Maldives’ breathtaking marine environment, as they enjoy a delicious meal. You & Me is also the first Bubbles Island in the Maldives with partnership with the world-renowned Champagne House “Veuve Clicquot”.

A golden opportunity to rediscover Maldives - admits Jose Enrique

Former Liverpool FC and Newcastle United defender Jose Enrique has been appointed as the Brand Ambassador. Jose will be collaborating with Maldives Border Miles team to promote it across the globe as the Ambassador.

The Spaniard from Valencia began his footballing career at hometown Levante and played for Valencia CF and Celta de Vigo before moving to English Premier League during 2007. He made his Liverpool debut on 2011 against Sunderland and earned the Man of the Match award in just the second league game against Arsenal.

Upon appointing as the very first Ambassador of the Maldives Border Miles, Jose said that he feels really privileged because Maldives is one of his favorite holiday destinations and described the country as ‘Paradise on Earth’. He also recommended his supporters to join the program as there are lots of benefits that can be explored as a member of the program.

Jose believes that Maldives Border Miles is a great program for repeated travelers to the Maldives to get rewarded for their loyalty towards the ‘Sunny Side of Life’. Additionally, he stated that it is a golden opportunity to rediscover Maldives and get privileged.

Activate your 5 senses of taste all the flavors of the best champagne in the world in a unique natural setting.

To become a member of the program, visit www.bordermiles.mv and follow the instructions. You shall also remember to use the registered email address, when you submit the Traveler Health Declaration / Disembarkation Card, during arrival and departure to and from the Maldives. However, if your points were not added automatically due to any reason, the social media representatives will be reachable to assist.
How the program is beneficial for each passenger

Considering all the possible scenarios for a frequent traveler, who would probably encounter aircraft delays, or in case of the Maldives where the passengers mostly wait at the airport until their boarding starts, or for the domestic transfer - Border Miles has addressed by partnering with leading international brands such as The Coffee Club, The Pizza Company, Burger King and Thai Express outlets at the Velana International Airport. Hence, the members can now enjoy discounts from these international cuisines while they wait at the Velana International Airport.

The world describes Maldives as the ‘Paradise on Earth’ and there are countless reasons to admire the natural beauty. Moreover, the uniqueness of the country has made it the world’s leading holiday destination offering a luxurious stay on the beach or over the lagoon in the water villas. On the other hand, the beauty has nurtured on a different perspective with the introduction of the Maldives Border Miles. This Program being an add-on for the members, it will be a great way to rediscover Maldives with the growth of the program.
## CRUNCHING NUMBERS

### TOURIST ARRIVALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>151,552</td>
<td>173,347</td>
<td>92,103</td>
<td>-39.2</td>
<td>-46.9</td>
<td>2,971</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>168,583</td>
<td>149,785</td>
<td>96,882</td>
<td>-42.5</td>
<td>-35.3</td>
<td>3,460</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>162,843</td>
<td>59,630</td>
<td>109,585</td>
<td>-32.7</td>
<td>+83.8</td>
<td>3,355</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>163,114</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>91,200</td>
<td>-44.1</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3,040</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>103,022</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>64,613</td>
<td>-37.3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2,084</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>113,475</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>56,166</td>
<td>-50.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1,872</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>132,144</td>
<td>1,752</td>
<td>101,818</td>
<td>-22.9</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3,284</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>139,338</td>
<td>7,636</td>
<td>143,599</td>
<td>+3.1</td>
<td>+1,780.6</td>
<td>4,632</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>117,619</td>
<td>9,605</td>
<td>114,896</td>
<td>-2.3</td>
<td>+1,096.2</td>
<td>3,830</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,251,690</td>
<td>401,810</td>
<td>870,862</td>
<td>-30.4</td>
<td>+116.7</td>
<td>3,190</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### REGIONAL TRENDS

(Arrivals and Growth Rate Year-on-Year)

#### AMERICAS
- **2019**: 84,794 (+23.3%)
- **2020**: 32,060 (-62.2%)
- **2021**: 55,730 (+407.8%) (as at end September)

#### EUROPE
- **2019**: 833,939 (+14.8%)
- **2020**: 348,349 (-58.2%)
- **2021**: 495,621 (+48.6%) (as at end September)

#### AFRICA
- **2019**: 18,695 (+21.8%)
- **2020**: 6,458 (-65.9%)
- **2021**: 20,360 (+451.9%) (as at end September)

#### MIDDLE EAST
- **2019**: 60,003 (+15.1%)
- **2020**: 26,288 (-56.2%)
- **2021**: 70,248 (+304.2%) (as at end September)

#### ASIA & THE PACIFIC
- **2019**: 705,140 (+13.5%)
- **2020**: 142,243 (-79.8%)
- **2021**: 228,658 (+108.4%) (as at end September)
### TOP 10 MARKETS by Nationality
(as at end September 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Share</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Change over 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>200,449</td>
<td>+467.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>171,308</td>
<td>+444.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>53,460</td>
<td>+84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>35,324</td>
<td>+167.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>30,339</td>
<td>+308.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Share</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Change over 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>28,318</td>
<td>+460.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>25,910</td>
<td>+484.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>18,746</td>
<td>-45.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>17,665</td>
<td>+481.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>16,226</td>
<td>+178.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TOP 10 ARRIVALS by Country of Residence
(as at end September 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Share</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Percentage of Arrivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td></td>
<td>162,236</td>
<td>98.7% were Russians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>India</td>
<td></td>
<td>161,963</td>
<td>98.0% were Indians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td>49,473</td>
<td>90.4% were Germans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>U.A.E</td>
<td></td>
<td>36,161</td>
<td>22.6% were Emiratis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td></td>
<td>36,161</td>
<td>77.5% were Saudis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Share</th>
<th>Arrivals</th>
<th>Percentage of Arrivals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>U.S.A</td>
<td></td>
<td>32,265</td>
<td>88.7% were Americans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Spain</td>
<td></td>
<td>26,068</td>
<td>91.1% were Spaniards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td></td>
<td>25,598</td>
<td>97.4% were Ukrainians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td></td>
<td>16,899</td>
<td>95.3% were Kazakhs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td></td>
<td>16,885</td>
<td>72.1% were Swiss</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AIRCRAFT OPERATING TO THE MALDIVES

**EUROPE**
- AEROFLOT
- AIR FRANCE
- AUSTRIAN AIRLINES
- AZUR AIR RUSSIA
- BRITISH AIRWAYS
- BLUE PANORAMA
- CONDOR
- EDELWEISS
- LUFTHANSA
- TURKISH AIRLINES

**INDIA**
- AIR INDIA
- GOAIR
- INDIGO
- AIR VISTARA
- BLUE AIR
- GULLIVAIR
- SCAT AIRLINES
- UKRAINE INT'L AIRLINES
- LOT POLISH AIRLINES
- IBERIA

**MIDDLE EAST**
- EMIRATES
- ETIHAD AIRWAYS
- FLY DUBAI
- GULF AIR
- QATAR AIRWAYS
- SAUDI ARABIAN AIRLINES

**OTHERS**
- SINGAPORE AIRLINES
- SRILANKAN AIRLINES
- SILK AIR
- AIR SEYCHELLES
- LOT POLISH AIRLINES
- BLUE AIR
- GULLIVAIR
- SCAT AIRLINES
- UKRAINE INT'L AIRLINES
- LOT POLISH AIRLINES
- IBERIA

**SCHEDULED** 29
**CHARTERED** 10
TOURIST FACILITIES
(In Operation as at end September 2021)

Accommodation Facilities
(at end September 2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.s</th>
<th>Beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resorts / Marinas</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>36,912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guesthouses</td>
<td>575</td>
<td>9,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safari Vessels</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>2,846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>885</strong></td>
<td><strong>51,084</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**H.A. ATOLL**
- 2 Resorts: 394 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 11 Guesthouses: 128 Beds

**H.DH. ATOLL**
- 1 Resort: 118 Beds
- 1 Hotels: 104 Beds
- 5 Guesthouses: 66 Beds

**SH. ATOLL**
- 2 Resorts: 457 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 3 Guesthouses: 24 Beds

**R. ATOLL**
- 12 Resorts: 3,254 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 2 Guesthouses: 22 Beds

**B. ATOLL**
- 16 Resorts: 3,040 Beds
- 1 Hotels: 150 Beds
- 37 Guesthouses: 632 Beds

**A.A. ATOLL**
- 10 Resorts: 2,074 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 118 Guesthouses: 1,518 Beds

**A.DH. ATOLL**
- 16 Resorts: 4,200 Beds
- 1 Hotels: 56 Beds
- 63 Guesthouses: 886 Beds

**M. ATOLL**
- 2 Resorts: 400 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 3 Guesthouse: 30 Beds

**F. ATOLL**
- 1 Resort: 250 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 8 Guesthouses: 100 Beds

**TH. ATOLL**
- 1 Resort: 152 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 4 Guesthouse: 56 Beds

**G.DH. ATOLL**
- 3 Resorts: 550 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 6 Guesthouses: 92 Beds

**S. ATOLL**
- 1 Resorts: 260 Beds
- 1 Hotels: 156 Beds
- 11 Guesthouses: 208 Beds

**N. ATOLL**
- 7 Resorts: 1,436 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 6 Guesthouses: 64 Beds

**LH. ATOLL**
- 10 Resorts: 2,250 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 4 Guesthouses: 44 Beds

**K. ATOLL**
- 52 Resorts: 12,710 Beds
- 224 Guesthouses: 3,564 Beds

**V. ATOLL**
- 4 Resorts: 694 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 44 Guesthouses: 504 Beds

**DH. ATOLL**
- 5 Resorts: 3,782 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 2 Guesthouses: 50 Beds

**L. ATOLL**
- 2 Resorts: 242 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 3 Guesthouses: 138 Beds

**G.A. ATOLL**
- 6 Resorts: 1,279 Beds
- 1 Hotels: 144 Beds
- 4 Guesthouse: 34 Beds

**GN. ATOLL**
- 0 Resorts: 0 Beds
- 0 Hotels: 0 Beds
- 17 Guesthouses: 208 Beds
Trust is critical to Restart Tourism, and relevant information the key

- Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary-General
  World Tourism Organization, UNWTO
LOCAL CUISINE

Maldivian Snacks

Since the olden days Maldivian communities have come together to make amazing varieties of snacks. These snacks range from sweet to savory but are always a delight to your taste buds. Here are some of the most enjoyed snacks in the Maldives.

Theluli Bambukeyo

Theluli Bambukeyo is a well-loved snack made from breadfruit. It is a local delicacy made during the breadfruit season in the islands. The breadfruit is cut into thin chips like slices after the skin has been peeled off. The slices are then fried in oil until it turns into a light brown color. The thinner the breadfruit is cut, the crunchier it will be after frying. These 'chips' are exchanged as gifts among Maldivians. It is enjoyed with its own or with our local fish paste ‘Rihaakuru’.

Kulhi Roshi

Kulhi Roshi is a spicy flatbread chip enjoyed as a snack in the Maldives. This delicacy is a local take on “nachos” made from a flavorful dough. To make this dough, a spice mix is first prepared using onions, garlic, curry leaves, scotch bonnets and salt with a little lime juice. Next, Rihaakuru coconut and Valhomas are added to this mixture. Lastly, flour is added and the resulting dough is rolled into thin flatbreads. It is then cut into small pieces and deep fried to make the ultimate Maldivian comfort food “Kulhi Roshi”.

Athujejhi

Athujejhi is made by mixing onions, garlic, curry leaves, chili, lime, salt, desiccated coconut, rice flour, Valhomas and Rihaakuru. After everything is mixed well together, it is then made into small marble sized balls. These balls are pressed with your thumb to create the shape of the Athujejhi. The pieces are then fried in hot oil until it turns it to a dark brown color.

Ulhaali

Ulhaali is a sweet delicacy enjoyed by many Maldivians. It is made by first making the dough. The dough is made with coconut cream, sugar, dry ground rice and flour. The dough is rolled out to form long thin strands. Then, large oiled leaves are used to make the patterns. The dough is laid out on the leaf in the desired pattern. The dough is then fried in hot oil till it turns golden brown. In some islands, it is common to use food coloring to make it in the desired color.