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Why You Should Visit This Bucket-List Destination Now



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Travel

I cover adventure, luxury and family travel.

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The Maldives are known for their overwater bungalows, many of which have private plunge pools and ... [+] GETTY

Traveling during a global pandemic is not the easiest, but certain places are aggressively doing their part to slow the spread of Covid-19, so that travelers can feel safe and hopefully visit . Tourism is a huge economic factor for many countries, and the push to bring back travelers, and to do so safely,

can be seen throughout the world. Some countries are doing an exceptional job in making sure tourists feel both safe and welcome. One such place is the Maldives. Here is what you need to know about traveling to this remote destination located in the Indian Ocean.

Vaccines and Hospitality Workers



The Maldives is a one-resort, one-island destination, which is ideal in a Covid environment. It ... [+] GETTY

Close to 100 percent of those working in the hospitality industry have received their first vaccine and over 50 percent have received their second. Those vaccinated include everyone from GMs down to receptionists, massage therapists, cooks, waiters, room cleaners, and back-office staff. This aggressive vaccine rollout is a big reason the Maldives is attracting international visitors, including Americans. Knowing that the staff surrounding travelers is vaccinated is a huge relief during what can be a stressful and fraught time of travel.

Testing Visitors



Travelers are asked to wear masks in public areas and social distance from other travelers. It's ... [+] GETTY

In the same spirit of hospitality workers being vaccinated, travelers must also show that they are Covid negative. While travelers are not required to be vaccinated prior to arrival, they are required to show a negative PCR test before embarking on their flight to the Maldives. This test must be administered no more than four days prior to departure. (Many airports, including New York's JFK, offer PCR tests with results in less than two hours.) Once at the resort in the Maldives, travelers must be tested again. While many vacationers tend to stay at just one resort for an extended period of time, if you are planning to travel from resort to resort, be aware that Covid tests are required at each property.

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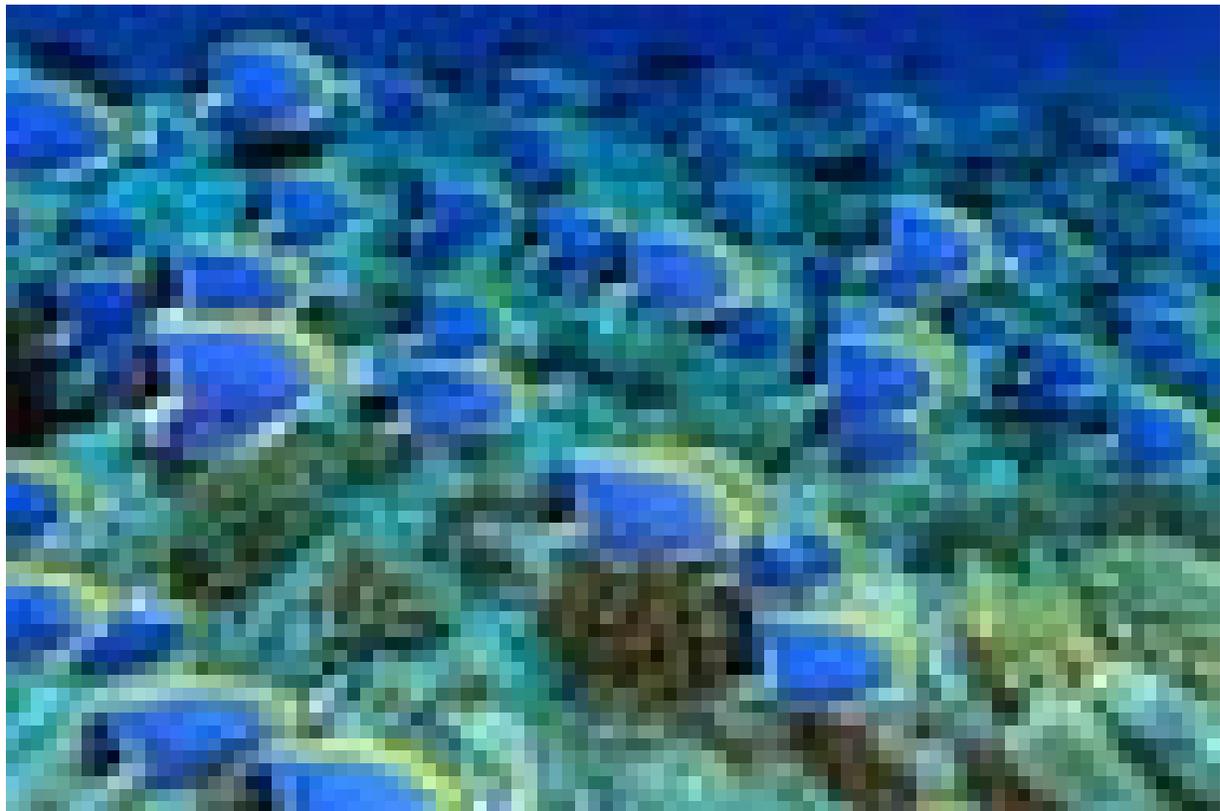
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Occupancy and Service



Lower occupancy numbers means there are more fish than people at some resorts. GETTY

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Currently, the Maldives, like many places in the world, is still not operating at 100 percent. While there's been a reduction in staff at most resorts, the service has not suffered. So, many travelers will experience the same luxe service expected, with fewer guests.



What makes the Maldives unique is that each resort resides on its own island. The good news is that each island, and therefore each resort, is a bubble. Travelers can really limit their exposure to local populations as well as fellow travelers. Plus, since many resorts in the Maldives feature over-water and beach bungalows that have private plunge pools and private access to the beach and water, travelers can stay as isolated as they want. For those who are comfortable interacting with others, many activities are being offered including diving, snorkeling, SUP, and kayaking.

Safety and Hygiene





The resorts do all the back-end work to make things clean and safe and running smoothly, so ... [+] GETTY

Most resorts in the Maldives have extensive safety and health protocols in place, including plexiglass at the reception area and other frequented areas. Restaurants space out diners and serving times. Food is allowed to be consumed only in specific areas. And high-trafficked areas—like spas and yoga classes—are limited throughout the day. The effect is a well-thought-out, safe, and secure vacation experience.

Why the Maldives?





The Maldives has some of the best diving in the world, since 99 percent of the country is made up of ... [+] GETTY

The Maldives is a country located in the Indian Ocean. It is made up of 1,190 islands, 200 of which are inhabited. It has been open to visitors since July 2020 and has been incredibly successful in controlling the spread of Covid-19 with both testing and an extensive vaccine rollout.

What makes the Maldives unique compared to other destinations is that 99 percent of the country is covered by water, so travelers are surrounded by beaches, gorgeous water, and sun. The population is small—little more than half a million people. Plus, while there are 156 resorts in the Maldives, each one is on its own island. The one-island-one-resort concept translates great from a Covid perspective, as each resort is self-contained, so you're in your own little bubble.

One important thing to note: If you test positive while on island, you must immediately quarantine for 14 days (in a separate room, in a quarantine area, which you must pay for). So if you're on your honeymoon or traveling with your family and you test positive, you have to be separated from your spouse or kids. The positive person goes into quarantine for 14 days while the nonpositive person stays in the room. It's completely understandable and justifiable, as it's the only way to keep the numbers down and stop the spread of Covid, but it's also good for travelers to know. Many places are not so aggressive with testing, therefore travelers could have Covid and other travelers would not know. It's good to be actively testing travelers, but it's also good to know what happens if you happen to be the one testing positive.

Also, while testing is required, the cost of that testing may not be covered by the resort. Each resort sets its own price (about \$100 per test). According to the ministry of tourism, the number of tourists who tested positive for Covid for this year is only 0.18 percent.

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