EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Maldive Dhoni Cruise (MC 2015)

BOAT JOURNEYS

TOURDURAT
8
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Relaxed
Tour Type: Small Groups
Tour Comfort: Simple
tour Code: MC

Tour Highlights - Maldive Dhoni Cruise

- ✓ Seven-day cruise - Relax on board a traditional dhoni boat, with all meals included and freshly prepared by the boat crew
- ✓ Uninhabited islands and pristine beaches - Visit unspoilt, idyllic corners of the Maldives, far away from the tourist resorts
- ✓ Remarkable snorkelling and swimming - Enjoy warm, clear water and spot manta rays, turtles and clown fish on spectacular reefs
- ✓ Traditional fishing villages - Spend time with the local people to gain an appreciation of their life in this tropical paradise
- ✓ Impressive barbeque banquet - Prepared by the boat crew on a sublime white-sand beach

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	7 nights Simple Boat
Included Meals:	7 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 7 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Male Airport
End Point:	Tour ends: Male Airport
Transport:	Boat
Countries:	Maldives

Maldive Dhoni Cruise

On this holiday, we cruise among the remote atolls of the idyllic Maldives, aboard a traditional dhoni. We eat and sleep aboard the boat as we sail between the unspoilt palm-fringed tropical islands of South Male, Felidhoo and Meemu. Along our way, we visit small fishing village communities and stop to swim or snorkel at beautiful coral reefs.

Why Book this tour

This tour is ideal if you want a chance to chill out and explore the real Maldives. Days are filled with snorkelling, swimming and relaxing on deck or visiting traditional fishing villages and meeting the locals.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Tour Comfort: Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, typically with en suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Relaxed

Easy paced tours with plenty of time to relax and absorb the sights and immerse yourself in the local surroundings.

Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

On this tour you will looked after by one of our Explore Representatives alongside the boat crew. The Explore Rep will be onhand to answer any queries you have, provide safety briefings regarding the boat and snorkelling trips and help you make the most of your time in the Maldives.

DAY 1 Join tour in Male; cruise to the South Male Atoll

Joining this tour at Male International Airport on Hulhule Island, our flight arrival is an experience in itself - the runway takes up the length of the island, with the terminal buildings taking up the remainder of the land space. After meeting up with our Explore representative and the rest of the group, we walk to the waterfront to meet our moored dhoni and crew. Having settled into our cabins, we aim to slip the lines and depart by mid-afternoon. Cruising south for two to three hours, we pass through the Vaadhoo Canal to the South Male Atoll - a smaller and quieter neighbour to the more developed North Male Atoll. Here, many of the islands are inhabited simply by vegetation and white sand, surrounded by clear turquoise water and reef. Our night stop may vary, but is most likely to be at Guraidhoo - a small, inhabited island where we will moor in, or just outside, the harbour. Every meal is included on the dhoni and this evening we settle down to our first dinner together. Menus are likely to include freshly-caught fish each day, as well curries and pasta. Drinking water, tea and coffee are readily available, with alcoholic and

soft drinks available for purchase on-board. Our cabins are compact, but with plenty of room for two people and luggage. However, many customers choose to enjoy the tranquillity of sleeping under the stars on deck for at least some of the nights.

Overnight: **Simple Boat**

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2 Sail to Vavuu Atoll and explore Kuda Anbaraa Island

Heading south today, we cruise to the Vavuu Atoll, where we spend time exploring the uninhabited and picturesque islands of Kudiboli and Kuda Anbaraa. When exploring this and other islands in the itinerary, it isn't necessary to bring special footwear. Most customers seem to manage well in flip-flops, and these have the obvious advantage of being quick to get on and off - ideal for walking through sand. Our afternoon is spent snorkelling or relaxing on board. Over the course of the week, underwater fauna we are likely to see include green turtles, reef sharks and gigantic manta rays, as well as smaller sting rays and eagle rays. At each stop, we will also swim among a rainbow of small, colourful fish, including the famous Clown Fish. Our knowledgeable Explore representative will be able to help identify many of the underwater species that we come across. Today, and each day, afternoon tea with freshly baked cake will be served by our talented chef. Tonight, we anchor in a large lagoon, providing further swimming opportunities.

Overnight: **Simple Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3 Snorkel in the clear waters of the Meemu Atoll

Today we sail south for a further two to three hours, crossing to Meemu Atoll - home to one of the longest stretches of reef in the Maldives. On this or other crossings, we may be lucky enough to be chased by spinner dolphins, who like jumping in our wake. We are also likely to see flying fish, sometimes leaping right over the deck of our dhoni. Meemu Atoll is made up of 34 islands, of which 25 are uninhabited. Some of the inhabited ones grow yams, and all of them are largely dependent on fishing. Here more than anywhere, we are likely to experience the true Maldivian way of life. Shortly after entering the atoll, we arrive at Fenboa Finolhu - another beautiful uninhabited island where we aim to base ourselves for the night. We will have plenty of time to enjoy the white-sand beach and to snorkel on the reef. This evening, we can look forward to a barbeque beach banquet in an idyllic spot on the island, laid on by the dhoni crew.

Overnight: **Simple Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 Cruise to Dhiggaru Island for a Bodu Beru display

After a relaxed start, we head east to the inhabited island of Dhiggaru. Here, we drop our anchor by a particularly good snorkelling reef. Later in the afternoon, when it has cooled down a bit, we plan to go ashore to meet the island's inhabitants. We may be struck by the traditional, yet relaxed, way of life in the island's lively village. Very few tourist groups visit and we must remember to dress and act respectfully, removing our shoes when visiting a house or a mosque. In the evening, we hope to be invited to a performance of Bodu Beru (Big Drum) - the traditional folk music of the country.

Overnight: **Simple Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Visit the traditional village of Felidhoo

Today, we head back to Felidhoo Atoll and its administrative centre, Felidhoo. With a population of about 400, this is the least populated of all the country's administrative centres. Again, we take time to visit the village and have the opportunity to enjoy another Bodu Beru performance.

Overnight: **Simple Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 Discover Hulhidhoo reef before sailing to Fulidhoo

By now, we are likely to be feeling completely relaxed, as our routine of reading, sunbathing and napping between island stops and snorkelling spots has become second nature. With a subtly different name to our previous day's stop-off, we break today's journey with a visit to Fulidhoo Island. Once again, we meet the locals and gain more of an appreciation of their life in this tropical paradise. After a further visit to the island of Hulhidhoo, we anchor by a large reef, where we can spend time snorkelling.

Overnight: **Simple Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 Sail to Male stopping to snorkel at Embudhoo Reef

Our last full day on the boat sees us cruising back towards Male. We take the opportunity for some final snorkelling and swimming, before enjoying a farewell meal with our boat crew.

Overnight: **Simple Boat**

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Tour ends in Male

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast. Once we have said our goodbyes to the crew, we disembark the dhoni and are transferred to Male International Airport.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

We work with a local operator who owns a number of different Dhonis; all of which are different sizes with different layouts. The boats we are most likely to be using are 9 and 14 berth Dhonis. We will either use one or two 9 berth boats, or the 14 berth boat (depending on the group size and make-up of the group). All Dhonis that we use are fitted with diesel engines, which are used most of the time that we are travelling. Some of the boats still have sails but these are used very infrequently.

All Dhonis are inspected annually in order to retain their license. They carry enough lifejackets for all clients and crew plus buoyancy aids and a dinghy with small outboard engine. All boats have a CB radio, and for most of the voyage the boat is in mobile phone range of the islands. Full fire fighting equipment is also carried on every boat. There will be a minimum of 4 or 5 crew on board including the captain and cook - depending on the number of people on the boat.

Most of the cabins offer couchette accommodation on a twin share basis with all bedding provided. The cabins are small and simple but adequate for sleeping and changing. In most of the cabins there will be bunk beds and so the person on the top will need to be prepared to climb up to their bed. Facilities are shared, and each boat has 3 or 4 toilets and 2 or 3 showers on board. There are plugs available in each cabin with electricty available when the boats generator is running (when the boat is moving or the crew are cooking meals) so it is possible to charge cameras and phones during the tour.

Good quality snorkelling equipment including mask, snorkel and flippers is provided (we will ask for your shoe/flipper size before you travel!). You are free to bring your own equipment should you wish. No scuba diving equipment will be carried on board. All meals are provided on board the Dhonis.

People requiring a gluten free diet may struggle a little in the Maldives. Breakfasts are often mashuni - a tuna and coconut combination which is served with roti style bread or a more western start to the day with eggs and toast. Most lunches and dinners will have a pasta element and during the afternoons the boat crew will often bake a cake. Whilst plenty of fresh veg, meat and fruit is also provided if you do follow a gluten free diet you may wish to take some snacks with you to supplement the diet on board the dhoni.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 7 lunches,7 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide.Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Maldives

Lunch £: 7.50

Dinner £: 12.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Maldives

Bottle of Beer £: 3.5

Water £: 1.50

International Departure Taxes

A departure tax was introduced in mid 2013. This is now included in the cost of airline tickets so there should be nothing to pay on your departure.

Tipping - Local Crew

Local Staff: In this area, tipping is a recognised part of life. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.

Accordingly, you should allow the equivalent of £25.00.

Foreign Exchange

Maldives

ATM Availability: No Access

Credit Card Acceptance: Not accepted

Travellers Cheques: Not accepted

Local Currency: Rufiyaa.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: It is advisable to carry dollars cash as you will need to pay for drinks on board the boat in dollars. Credit cards or Travellers cheques are not accepted on board. It is unlikely that you will need any local currency (Rufiyaa) but your tour leader will brief you on this on arrival.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a ‘flight inclusive’ package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the ‘Land Only’ arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific ‘Joining Instructions’ prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the ‘Land Only’ arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

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Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Visa Information

Maldives: Citizens of the UK, Australia, New Zealand, US and Canada are given a free 30 day permit on arrival. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Flights via Sri Lanka:
If your flight requires you to transit in Sri Lanka then you will not be required to obtain a Sri Lankan visa if your transit time is less than 48hrs.

The Sri Lankan authorities require that your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after departure from Sri Lanka.

Vaccinations & Protection

Maldives

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis & polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Travellers may wish to immunise themselves against meningitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/ and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

Maldives

Day time temperatures are remarkably consistent throughout the year ranging from 30°C to 32°C dropping to between 25°C and 26°C at night. Although rain is heaviest in June, July and August, heavy rain can fall at any time of year – even in February and March when statistically only 50mm usually falls during those months combined. The south-west monsoon lasts from May to November and not only brings the rains but also stronger winds and storms, although the transitional periods of early May and late November are supposed to be calm with exceptionally clear water.

Clothing

Only lightweight clothing is needed. Local people in Male and in villages on the islands find western styles of dress extremely offensive. Brief shorts, tight fitting clothing etc. should be avoided by both men and women. A sarong and something to cover the head (for women) is recommended. Don't forget swimming gear and clothes to protect you from the sun including a wide brimmed hat. You may consider wearing a Tshirt whilst snorkelling to avoid bad sunburn on the back and shoulders.

Equipment

You may like to bring your own snorkel and mask although they will be provided on the Dhonis. Bring a torch. Also high factor sun protection and a hat. We recommend Factor 30 plus for snorkelling as the water intensifies the sun's strength. Both bath and beach towels are provided on the Dhoni.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes and sandals.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. A soft holdall is the best option as luggage is stored under the beds in the cabins. Remember you are expected to carry your own baggage - so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Maldives

Population: 313,920

Size of Country: 298 km sq

Major Language: Dhivehi, English

Religion: Islam

Time Difference to GMT: +5

Electric Supply & Plugs

Maldives

3 Pin Flat

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport . Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditional, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is ‘Available’ or ‘Guaranteed’ we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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