

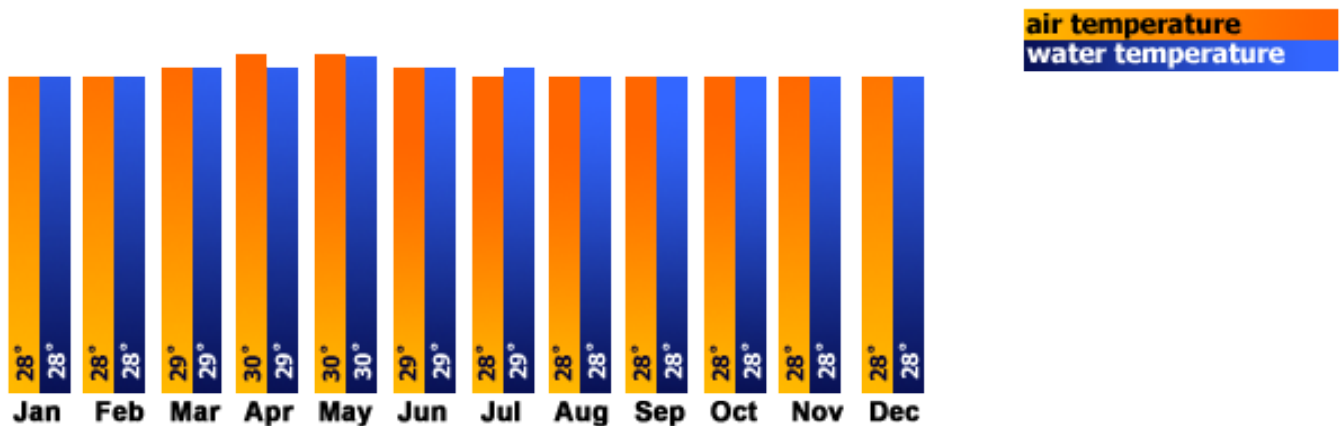
**Location:** The Maldives are composed of 1192 islands and are made up of 26 atolls. The atolls of Maldives encompass a territory spread over roughly 90,000 square kilometers, making it one of the most disparate countries in the world. Of its 1,192 islands only two hundred are inhabited.

**Languages:** The national language is Dhivehi. English is widely used as a business language in government offices and the commercial sector. Other languages are widely used within tourist areas.

**Religion:** The indigenous population is entirely Sunni Muslim, and the group practice of other religions is illegal. During Islamic events such as the months of Ramadan (please contact us to find out when this will be happening) shop hours are shorter and some hotel facilities or excursions may be limited or unavailable. Please respect local customs and dress appropriately.

**Time:** GMT + 5

**Weather & Water Temperature:** The Maldives has a hot tropical climate. There are two monsoons, the southwest from May to October and the northeast from November to April. Generally the southwest brings more wind and rain in June and July. The temperature rarely falls below 25°C.



**Electricity:** 230 volts AC, 50Hz. Round-pin plugs are used, although square-pin plugs are now becoming more common. It's advisable to take an adaptor, as they are not widely available. We also highly recommend that you take a surge adaptor with you if using expensive and valuable appliances. If you have a specific electrical requirement please contact one of the Scuba Team who can discuss this with you and advise you accordingly.

**Currency:** Maldivian currency is the Rufiyaa. US \$'s and credit cards are widely accepted on the island resorts. US \$'s are recommended for meal/drinks and souvenirs not included in the trip.

**Tipping:** Tipping is not compulsory in the Maldives as 10% service charge is added to everything - but given the low salaries earned by the staff and the level of service generally offered as being excellent it is a nice gesture to help the staff of resorts to earn some extra money. If you are unsure what to give please do hesitate to speak with the local dive guide or contact us.

**Visas:** Tourist visas for 30 days will be issued on arrival only and are free of charge to all visitors in possession of valid travel documents.

**Food & Drink:** The biggest form of health problems with divers and tourists alike is being dehydrated. Please drink plenty of water before and after a dive as well as throughout the day. We also advise that you don't drink the local water and only drink bottle water and wash all fruit beforehand. Please be aware that it is illegal to bring alcohol into the country and many of the resorts will have high charges for imported branded drinks.

**Foreign & Commonwealth Office Travel Advice:** For up to date advice on foreign travel please visit <http://www.fco.gov.uk>.

**Health & Vaccinations:** Requirements vary from country to country, your own GP is the best person to speak to regarding relevant requirements. Make your GP aware that you will be scuba diving, as some medication is not recommended for Scuba divers.

**Clothing:** Towels are provided in the rooms but we recommend you take your own beach towel for after diving. Shorts, T-shirts and swimwear are the norm. When on or visiting inhabited islands and Male please respect local customs and dress appropriately. For men shorts and shirts are acceptable but women are expected to cover their bodies and thighs. While swimming trunks, bikinis and other beachwear is the norm on the resort, they are not acceptable on inhabited islands. Remember that nudism in public places is prohibited.

**Passports:** Passports must be valid for at least 6 months on your return to the UK.

**Departure Tax :** With effect from 1st January 2012, an Airport Development Charge of USD 25 per person from all departing passengers above 2 years of age will apply.

*Please note that although we maintain and revise this information frequently, the information contained within these documents is subject to change without notice. Please check with one of our travel consultants for the latest information.*