



Maldives – Emperor Explorer Trip Preparation Information

Below is valuable information which will help make your dive trip more enjoyable. If there are questions not covered below, please contact Explorer Ventures Liveaboard Fleet. Photographs and vessel layouts are available online at www.explorerventures.com

THE VESSEL

The M/V Emperor Explorer comfortably accommodates 26 passengers in 13 large double staterooms, all of which have private bathroom facilities, and 7 of which can be configured to accommodate a couple or two singles. The staterooms are located on three of the vessel's four decks. The topmost deck is the sun deck, which offers both shaded and full-sun areas for relaxation as well as massage services. The upper deck includes a lounge and bar, suites 11 & 12, staterooms 13 & 14, a small lounge area and the bridge. Forward on the upper deck is a spa tub for your enjoyment. The large main deck contains the air-conditioned dining and lounge area, TV viewing area with DVD/CD music system, common restroom, suites 9 & 10, galley, camera charging station and a large camera table. There are two sets of stairs accessing the swim platform where two in-water ladders hang for easy access to and from the water for a refreshing swim when the vessel is at anchor. Staterooms 1-3 & 5-8 are located on the lower deck, accessed via stairs from the lounge. The Emperor Explorer is also equipped with a wireless router providing internet connection for a fee. Cellular phone and internet access are available when in proximity to many of the islands if your phone is so equipped. Internet cards and cellular phone cards are also available for purchase at the airport. The vessel's location determines the reliability of access to the internet. The vessel uses 220 V and 110 V AC power (UK 3 pin electrical sockets throughout; some charging outlets can accept the European style 2 pin plugs). Recharging station for strobes, batteries, etc. You should bring your own adapters. No charging is allowed in the cabins when unattended – there is a charging station in the salon.

DIVING CONDITIONS

The weather in the Maldives is tropically pleasant with a year-round sea breeze. Air temperatures range from lows around 78°F (26°C) to highs in the upper 80s to low 90s (30-34°C). There are two distinct but mild monsoon seasons in this equatorial country and each is named after the prevailing wind direction during that time of year. The northeast monsoon runs from December to April and brings relatively consistent, fair weather, but also often brings significant currents. The southeast monsoon from May through October brings a bit more wind and occasional rain (usually short-lived), but generally not as much current.

The vessel's itineraries are designed to take advantage of the changing conditions and to provide guests the best diving for the different seasons.

The visibility is usually at its peak in December and January – sometimes well over 100 feet (30 meters)! Mantas can be seen throughout the year with the best feeding-station encounters typically during the May to November timeframe. Whale sharks are also seen most every month of the year, with the highest concentration seen in the monsoon transition months of April, May, October and November. Water temperatures remain a toasty 80-85° F (27-29C) throughout the year. Most divers are comfortable with at most a 3mm wetsuit.

DIVING LOGISTICS

All of the dives aboard the Emperor Explorer are offered at scheduled times, up to 4 times daily including 1-2-night dives per charter (weather & itinerary permitting). This is to allow adequate surface intervals, provide the option for guided dives on as many sites as possible, and to allow the vessel to travel on schedule to different locations. Please note that Maldivian regulations limit the maximum depth for all dives to 100 feet (30 meters). Given the prevalence of drift diving in the area, your dives will be done from a large custom-built diving dhoni (tender). This is no ordinary tender! The dhoni is 78.7 feet (24m) long and has ample space for all divers, cameras, and gear. There are individual gear bins for each diver, separate camera and wetsuit rinse tanks and a bathroom with toilet and hot water shower plus two freshwater showers on the dive platform. Both the air and nitrox compressors are on the dhoni as well.

NITROX

Nitrox is available and included in the package price for certified Nitrox divers. Please read our [Nitrox](#) page for more information.

SNORKELERS/NON-DIVERS

Non-divers are welcome onboard Emperor Explorer. Some sites offer excellent snorkeling opportunities, but not every day. Non-divers get a \$50 voucher to be spend onboard and a free snorkeling kit rental at no additional charge.



MINIMUM AGE RESTRICTIONS

The minimum certifiable age for divers is 10 for most scuba certification agencies; normally, the agencies restrict 10- and 11-year-olds to a maximum depth of 40 feet (12 meters). Emperor Explorer, therefore, allows children as young as 10 years to participate in our trips, with the following restrictions:

- All children under the age of 15 must travel and dive with their parent or guardian unless undergoing active training with an instructor. Minors must be accompanied onboard by a guardian at all times.
- Our itineraries offer very few diving opportunities at depths less than 40 feet (12 meters); diving opportunities for 10- and 11-year-olds will be significantly less than those for older divers. For this reason, a minimum age of 12 for divers is strongly suggested.
- A parent/legal guardian will be required to sign the liability release on behalf of a child under the age of 18.
- There are special requirements for minors traveling aboard any of the vessels. Please contact us for full details.

SAFETY STANDARDS

To ensure your safety, the vessel requires the following of all divers:

1. All divers must be certified as open water scuba divers by an internationally recognized certification organization.
2. We recommend that divers log at least one dive within the 12 months prior to boarding the vessel or are encouraged to participate in a refresher course on board. [Rental/Course Pricing \(PDF\)](#)
3. All divers must adhere to the buddy system.
4. All divers must log in and out of the water with a member of the diving staff.
5. A dive computer, SMB and reef hooks are required (SMB and reef hooks can be borrowed on board)
6. Dive lights are required for night dives.
7. By local regulations, decompression and solo diving are not allowed under any conditions. The maximum allowed depth is 100 feet (30 meters).
8. Diving activities must cease when the consumption of alcohol begins.
9. Please note that due to a combination of staff and equipment logistics, insurance requirements and local diving regulations, rebreathers, diver propulsion vehicles (DPVs) and multi-cylinder configurations (except for a small pony bottle) may not be used aboard Explorer Ventures Fleet vessels.
10. Dive accident insurance (DAN, DiveAssure or equivalent) is required. A per day policy and weekly dive insurance can be purchased onboard. The cost is US\$7/day or US\$22/week (prices subject to change). Please note that local short-term policies are not available for divers 75 years of age or older.

DIVE EQUIPMENT LIST

The vessel provides tanks (most of them are equipped with Pro-Valves to accommodate DIN and Yoke regulators), hard weights and weight belts for your use. If you prefer to rent the rest of your equipment from us, we have all of the equipment that you will need. Please indicate on your application form what equipment (and size) you will require. Otherwise, the following items are the diver's responsibility:

- Any hand-signed PDF forms (only if not completed online)
- Certification cards
- Proof of DAN (or similar) dive accident insurance (required)
- Diving logbook (strongly encouraged) •
- Mask & Snorkel *
- Fins *
- Booties (if you wear them)
- Dive computer (required) *
- Buoyancy Control Device *
- Regulator w/alternate air source
- Submersible pressure and depth gauges *
- Underwater time piece *
- Dive light (required for night dives) *
- Tank Marker Lights (suggested for night dives)
- Shorty Wetsuit – 3 mm *
- Repair kit w/ spare parts
- Safety sausage/SMB (required and complimentary)
- Reef hook (required and complimentary)

* Available for rent on board. [Rental/Course Pricing \(PDF\)](#)

WHAT TO BRING

If your trip requires a domestic flight in the Maldives, please note that the current baggage allowance is 25 kg (55 pounds) per passenger. The excess charge is from MVR 48 to MVR 60 /per kg + 16% (approx. \$0.36/pound) and is subject to change.

Packing for a liveaboard trip is much easier than packing for a land-based vacation. Dress aboard the vessel is very casual. The climate doesn't require much more than shorts, T-shirts, and swimsuits. Please bring at least one set of more modest clothing if visiting the town or villages. In town, local custom dictates that the body be covered from at least the shoulders to the knees, with short sleeves being preferable to sleeveless tops. Soft luggage is recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. Reef-safe sunscreen, sunglasses, and a visor or hat are strongly recommended. In case of rough weather or if you have a tendency toward seasickness, come prepared with motion-sickness medications or Transderm patches from your doctor. Bath towels, hand towels and dive towels are provided on board. Soaps and shampoo are provided.



If possible, pack your regulator, dive computer, mask, certification and dive insurance cards, swimsuit, change of clothes and necessary medications and toiletries in your carry-on bag. Having these items will make an unexpected luggage delay far more bearable. There is a long list of items that are prohibited in the Maldives. This includes, but is not limited to: firearms, narcotics, alcohol (including for personal consumption), pornography, pork products and religious idols (except for personal use). Bags are routinely searched by customs agents upon arrival.

MEALS

Aboard the *Emperor Explorer*, evening meals and lunches usually consist of vegetables, rice, pasta, soup, chicken, beef or fish with occasional local specialties offered as additional options. Breakfast is the usual fare of eggs, beef bacon, sausages, pancakes, French toast, potatoes, cereal and fruit. Vegetarians are well accommodated. If you have any dietary restrictions or requests, please indicate them on your application form. Please note that specific brands of drinks, dressings and food are often unavailable in the Maldives, and it can be very difficult for us to find low-fat, gluten-free or soy products, fresh fruit, shellfish and other items common elsewhere. Pork and pork products are not served aboard. While we will do our best to accommodate your requests, please be realistic and consider bringing some of your own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk. Water, tea, drip coffee and a glass of wine with dinner is complimentary. Due to the difficulty of importing alcohol and fruit into the Maldives, additional beer or wine, freshly made juices or any hard liquor will be added to your onboard bill.

COMMUNICATIONS & WI-FI

- Vital messages may be passed to guests by calling the booking office at 1.800.322.3577
- Internet access is available aboard, when in service ranges (\$30 per 5GB Data Package).

The local agent for *Emperor Explorer* can be reached from North America via phone at +960.764.4995 and will be able to contact the vessel. Cellular phone and internet access are available when in proximity to some of the islands if your phone is so equipped. Internet cards/access and cellular phone cards are available for purchase at the airport. Wireless routers providing internet connection are available on the vessel with a fee (connection can be slow). The connections are based on 3G network and are good for basic emails, web browsing ad social medias posts but not fast enough for large downloads. The vessel's location does determine the reliability of access to the internet.

WHAT IS THE CURRENCY?

- US dollars are widely accepted
- Most major credit cards are accepted

In the Maldives, US dollars (cash) and credit cards are widely accepted, as are Euros, although change may be given in the local currency, the Rufiyaa. Be aware that obtaining foreign currency in the Maldives is very difficult, although currency exchange is available at banks in Male and at the airport. Only newer US dollars and Euros with no tears, rips or any markings will be accepted at banks, money exchangers and onboard.

ONBOARD CHARGES

Your bill may be paid at the end of the trip using Visa or Mastercard (4% surcharge will be added), or cash (US dollars, Euros or Sterling). Personal or traveler's checks are not accepted on board, and we are unable to provide cash for credit card charges more than invoice amounts.

CREW GRATUITY

Crew gratuities are not included in your package. The crew works very hard, 7 days a week and many weeks at a stretch to provide the best possible service for our guests. The industry standard for crew gratuities on dive trips (if of course, you are happy with the service which you have received) is between 10% and 15% of the regular published package price per passenger. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

ARRIVAL

- Valid return airline ticket
- 30-day free tourist visa issued at airport
- Arrival the day before is encouraged
- Most transfer costs are included
- Arrangements are made to pick you up

The airport code for the international airport in the Maldives is MLE. Please note that a passport is required for all visitors arriving in the Maldives. A valid return or onward airline ticket is also required. All visitors to the Maldives are issued a free 30-day visa. Americans, Canadians, and most other countries' citizens do not need an advance visa. If in doubt, please contact the nearest consulate. We encourage you to arrive at least a day early so you have a "cushion" if there are flight or luggage delays, and so that you arrive aboard refreshed.



Airport transfers on the day of embarkation and disembarkation are included in your package. If you arrive on boat departure day, you will be met by a boat representative wearing an Emperor Maldives T-shirt and holding a sign displaying Emperor Maldives. *Emperor Explorer* arranged transfers depart the airport to the boat at 12:00 noon and 4:00 pm and are free of charge. If you arrive after the last transfer, water taxis are available for around \$15. If you arrive prior to boat departure day and your trip starts in Male, you should plan on returning to the airport for the 4:00 pm transfer by dhoni to the *Emperor Explorer*. The dhoni ride from the airport to the vessel is about 15 minutes. If you arrive prior to boat departure day and you have a domestic flight at the beginning of the trip, you should plan on meeting the representative at the domestic airport an hour and a half prior to departure time of the domestic flight.

Domestic Flights: When needed, please book directly your domestic flight to/from Gan with a local airline. It is highly recommended that travelers arrive 120 minutes before departure for domestic flights. It is also recommended to book either the earliest possible flight to the departure city of the boat or to arrive a day before boarding in case of delays or schedule flight changes. You should check any baggage limitations and weight allowances with the domestic airline at the time of booking to avoid excess charges or your bag being uplifted to a later flight.

Explorer Ventures & Emperor Divers Maldives cannot be held responsible or hold the boat's departure as a result of delays or cancellations of any domestic flights.

FLIGHT DELAY

If you miss any of your flights and are not able to make it to the *Emperor Explorer* on schedule, please call the USA booking office at 1.800.322.3577 (US/Canada) or call or WhatsApp the local contact's cell +960.764.49.95 or the local General Manager's cell +960.799.6657 or +44.7976.627.123. Notify the crew of your updated arrival time should you have that information, and where you may be reached in the meantime.

DEPARTURE FLIGHT

The *Emperor Explorer* arrives at its final destination port on the afternoon of the day prior to disembarkation. An optional land visit may be offered on the final afternoon for itineraries ending near Male. Passengers spend the final night and have breakfast prior to disembarking at 7:00 am. There will be sufficient time to catch a commercial flight out at any time on the day of disembarkation. The dhoni will take you and your luggage to the airport after breakfast (or earlier if you have an early flight). If you have a flight late in the afternoon or in the evening, the airport hotel offers luggage storage and pool/beach/shower use for the day for a fee. If you'll be staying at one of the outlying resorts after the charter, the dhoni will take you back to the airport so you may meet your resort's transfer.

MORE INFOS ON TRAVELING TO MALDIVES

- Visit the Maldives Tourism website: <https://visitmaldives.com/>
- Visit the [U.S. Passports and International Travel website](#) for more information on obtaining, renewing, or to apply online for a U.S. Passport.
- Visit the Centers for [Disease Control website](#) for current health recommendations.

PACKAGES INCLUDE

- 7 nights/8 days or 10 nights/11 days aboard vessel
- 3 meals daily, plus snacks
- Up to 4 dives daily (weather and itinerary permitting)
- Air fills, weights and belts
- Nitrox fills for certified divers
- Scheduled airport transfers on the days of embarkation/disembarkation
- Water, tea, drip coffee and a glass of wine or beer with dinner is complimentary
- Optional land visit
- Beach barbecue (weather permitting)
- Maldivian GST (General Service Tax)
- Government Green Tax

PACKAGES DO NOT INCLUDE

- International and domestic flights, airport taxes
- Rental, instruction and retail charges
- Soft drinks, fresh juices and additional alcohol (cocktails, liquors, wine and beer)
- Dive accident insurance (required)
- Trip insurance (recommended)
- Crew gratuity
- Hanifaru Snorkeling Permit (if applicable)
- [Current onboard charges](#)

Have a wonderful trip onboard
Emperor Explorer!

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