Top 10 Dives Sites - Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru and Angsana Ihuru

1. Lankan Manta Point

Location : Outside of Lankan Finolhu (Paradise Island Resort)
Distance from Vabbinfaru/Ihuru : One hour
Best time to dive : South West Monsoon (April – December)
Average visibility : 10 - 25 meters, but visibility may reach up to 40 meters
Depth of reef : Average 8 - 20 meters. Maximum: 30 meters
Features : Manta rays, turtles, schooling fishes, giant trevallys.

“Lankan Manta Point’ is located on the outside reef of Paradise Island Resort (Lankan Finolhu). Between 8 - 22 meters of water on the south east corner of Lankanfinolhu reef are several large rocks which mark the point where the Manta Rays converge during the south west monsoon. These rocks are one big cleaning station for the Manta Rays. The reef top starts from 8 meters forming a gradual slope down to 30 meters. During the South West Monsoon when the plankton blooms Manta Rays gather at various cleaning stations where the cleaner wrasses are waiting to remove the old skin and the parasites and when finished they swim gracefully up and down the reef feeding on zooplankton in shallow water. The ‘Manta Rays’ can grow up to 4 meters in width and can remain at the cleaning station circling around the divers throughout the dive until we are bored!. A unique and exciting dive for all level of divers, even without the mantas.

2. Kuda Haa (protected marine area)

Location : Thila North of Giravaru Island resort
Distance from Vabbinfaru/Ihuru : 45 minutes
Best time to dive : All year round
Average visibility : 20 - 25 meters
Depth of reef : 5 - 35 meters
Features : Good coral life & reef fishes

"Kuda Haa" is a protected marine sanctuary shaped like a two-humped camel's back. Rising from 35 meters below the sea to six, this beautiful reef is covered in sponges and corals. The abundance of fish living here simply takes your breath away. Large schools of blue-striped snapper roam the deep; clouds of basslets, fusiliers and butterfly fish swim all over, while sharks hover in the shallow areas. You might also come across moray eels, cleaner shrimp and the rare scorpion and leaf fish. This is truly a dive you shouldn't miss when visiting the Maldives.

3. Dhon Bibi Haa

Location : South west North Male Atoll
Distance from Vabbinfaru/Ihuru : 30 minutes
Best time to dive : All year round
Average visibility : 20 - 30 meters
Depth of reef : 3 - 30 meters
Features : coral, small animals, stone fish, lionfish , frog fish , ribbon eel

“Dhon Bibi Haa’ is a small circular reef located in the inner atoll about 30 minutes from the resort. The top reef extends to about 60 – 70 meters in diameter with the top starting from 3-4 meters. The reef walls sheer to the sandy bottom to a depth of 25 – 30 meters. Various colorful coral blocks are located between 17-24 meters. The most interesting part of the reef is the top and the coral blocks where we have the possibility to see a good variety such as frog fish , stonefish’s, lion fish and if you are lucky you can encounter the ribbon eels.
Due to the location the reef is very much protected from strong current making it a dive site for all level of divers.

4. Hulhangu Kandu

Location : North West Male Atoll
Distance from Vabbinfaru/Ihuru : 45 minutes
Best time to dive : All year round
Average visibility : 20 - 40 meters
Depth of reef : 10 - 40meters
Features : Pelagics , reef fish , eagle rays

"Hulhangu Kandu" is situated on the corner of an outer reef next to a channel where the reef is formed with a few ‘humps” (part of the reef coming out of the reef into blue water formed as humps). As the reef is not in one line the current keeps changing due to the protection of the reef. The top reef slopes down from 7-10 meters to over 50 meters. When commencing your dive you will jump into the edge of the reef into the deep blue of the ocean with nothing much around you until the current takes you to the front point of the reef, where you might observe a large school of gray reef, silver tip and white tip sharks circling the deeper waters. Looking up at the surface you will discover eagle rays dancing in the current accompanied by tunas and barracudas. After some time of underwater dreaming, you can let the current carry you along the reef and enjoy the other treasures it has to offer.

5. Nassimo Thila (Paradise Rock)

Location : 1.5 km West of Lankanfinolhu (Paradise Island Resort)
Distance from Vabbinfaru/Ihuru : 50 min
Best time to dive : All year round
Average visibility : 20 - 30 meters
Depth of reef : 10 - 35 meters
Features : Pelagics, soft corals, sea fans , pinnacles

"Nassimo Thila" is regarded as one of the best sites for soft corals & marine life in North Male’ atoll. It’s an oval shape reef with the top from 10 – 15 meters with several large pinnacles of soft corals scattered at various depth from 18 – 25 meters These rocks are exposed to full force of the current and a spectacular display of soft corals can be observed on the rock faces and overhangs. On the North side of the main reef between 15-22 meters there are beautiful overhangs full of yellow & blue soft corals. On the southern end, the overhangs are full of sea fans in various sizes and soft corals. On several occasions we have encountered napoleons, large tunas, sharks, big-eye trevallys, black snappers and nurse sharks. Due to the location strong current can be encountered making it a bit of a challenge. Need to be an advance diver to make most of it.

6. Okobe Thila

Location : Inner South East North Male Atoll
Distance from Vabbinfaru/Ihuru : 40 minutes
Best time to dive : All year round
Average visibility : 15 - 30 meters
Depth of reef : 10 - 35 meters
Features Pelagics, Reef fishes, anemones

The "Okobe" marine reserve is one of the most awe-inspiring dive sites in the Maldives, a small thila consisting of three large rock formations starting from 10 – 28 meters. A descent line is used due to the size of the reef to avoid being drifted off the reef. All three rocks are pitted with nooks and crannies, steep ledges, overhangs and caves providing a variety of marine life for the divers. The top reef is also famous for anemone fish in large numbers. If you believe you are in an aquarium, you will be forgiven. The reef is not large but requires more than one dive if you want to take in all the beautiful corals and fish. A "must see" dive in the North Male Atoll.

7. Rasfari (protected marine area)

Location : Outside Rasfari
Distance from Vabbinfaru/Ihuru : One hour
Best time to dive : All year round
Average visibility : 15 - 30 meters
Depth of reef : 8 - 40 meters
Features : Sharks, pelagics, eagle rays , trevallys

"Rasfari" is a spectacular outer reef of Rasfari Island There is plenty of variation on topography with sandy inlets and ridges cutting across a wide outside reef.. Its large sloping wall falls from 10 meters to a depth of 28 meters. On the sandy bottom at a depth of 28 meters on top a thila (circular reef) can be spotted where it drops down over 30 meters from outside. The top of the thila is a perfect location to observe the pelagics, grey reef sharks , schooling big-eye trevallys , great barracuda's and schooling eagle rays. Oceanic reef sharks have been spotted a few times. Due to the depth to do the proper dive need to be an advance diver with a bit of experience. Strong current can be encountered and can be done as a drift dive.

8. Bodu Hithi Thila

Location : Thila inside Hithi Kandu
Distance from Vabbinfaru/ Ihuru : One hour
Best time to dive : All year around
Average visibility : 8 - 25 meters
Depth of reef : 5 - 30 meters
Features : Mantas, reef fishes, nurse sharks, reef sharks, lobsters

"Bodu Hithi Thila" is a formation a huge thila (circular reefs) located in the middle of the inner atoll just 55 minutes from the resort. The reef top is 8-10 meters and there are three bays in the reef with sandy bottom between 15-25 meters. These sandy bays on the top reef are sometimes known as 'Manta Road', as this is where mostly they gather for cleaning. This is a long reef with the best diving in the southern end. On one point there is a huge cave at 17 meters where divers can look into. On many occasions nurse sharks have bee spotted in this cave and on the top reef underneath the blocks. Hard coral cover is not the best but there are plenty of healthy light blue soft corals. Manta rays are seen over here between December and April. During your dive you can kneel on the sandy road whilst watching these majestic mantas circling above you waiting for their turn to be cleaned. As it is not uncommon to see ten or more manta rays at a time, this dive has become a big attraction for both beginners and experienced divers.

9. Banana Reef (protected marine area)

Location : Inner South East North Male Atoll
Distance from Vabbinfaru/Ihuru : 45 minutes
Best time to dive : All year round
Average visibility : 20 - 35 meters
Depth of reef : 3 - 30 meters
Features : Coral , reef fishes, big-eye trevallys, moray eels

"Banana Reef" is a very well known dive site in the Maldives - one of the first, one of the best and one of the more treacherous due to strong currents. On the eastern side of the banana-shaped reef, some rocks have broken away and created a perfect habitat for a surprising variety of schooling reef fish and large pelagic. Amongst the large overhangs resides an enormous school of blue-striped snapper. As you carry on along this banana-shaped dive, you will discover a pristine reef wall bursting with life, from different species of moray eels to fascinating corals and fish. Suitable for all level of divers depending on the current.

10. Maagiri

Location : North East of North Male Atoll
Distance from Vabbinfaru/Ihuru : One hour
Best time to dive : All year round.
Average visibility : 15 - 25 meters
Depth of reef : 7 - 35 meters
Features : Manta mobulas,pelagics, small fishes ,

'Maagiri' is a huge 'thila' located in the inner channel of Kanduoggiri & Lankan Finolhu surrounded by a number of small thilas. North side of Maagiri is known as Maagiri caves which consist of small overhangs between the depths of 5 -30 meters, with a big rock at 20 meters appear to have broken away from the reef creating a canyon. On the Eastern side of Maagiri there are series of rock formations around 20 meters that is mainly protected from strong currents making it an ideal site for beginners and experience divers and photographers who prefers to do slow dives.