

PROTECT THE MALDIVES

Dear Tourist, welcome to the Maldives!

The Maldives are one of the last paradises on earth – please help us to ensure it remains so. You will have a wonderful holiday here. With your co-operation, future generations will also have the opportunity to enjoy this paradise. As Jacques Cousteau said about the Maldives:

»The human being is a guest in this paradise and should behave accordingly.«

Our request to you is, please keep to the following guidelines during your holiday and, if necessary, request others to do so too.

The underwater-world

The Maldives are unique on earth. You are presently staying on an island formed by coral. If it wasn't for the coral, there wouldn't be any islands. That is why we have to protect the coral. You think you see a stone in the water? No you do not! It is a living coral. What you see is a limestone product, which has been built over thousands of years by millions of polyps. These polyps are so small that you cannot see them. When you touch a coral, you destroy these polyps.

The coral reef is, after the rainforest, the most complex ecological system on earth. More than 100.000 species live here. Coral is the centre of this ecosystem.

▶ Therefore: **Do not touch the coral!**

Every island has especially created, marked entrances to enable easy access to the reef for diving and snorkelling. Please use these entrances, do not trample on the coral and bear the change of the tide in mind on your snorkelling trips. Seek information at the dive base. If you swim over the reef at high tide, your way could be barred at low tide.

▶ **Never walk on the top of the reef!**

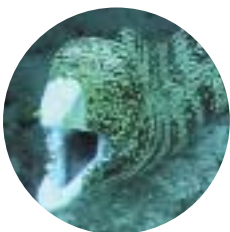
The coral gardens of the Maldives are considered to be some of the most beautiful in the world. The complexity of this ecosystem can hardly be imagined. Every living creature has its place, except for the human being. Therefore: please behave like a guest in this fascinating underwater world. Do not touch anything! Respect the living space of the animals and enjoy as a guest the astonishing variety of species.

▶ **Respect the living space of the animals and do not touch any of them!**

Rubbish

Please bear in mind that you are on a small island in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Rubbish disposal is a difficult issue on the Maldives and one of the biggest challenges for the future. Every piece of rubbish that is produced must be burned. Please help to avoid rubbish. We would be grateful if you take your rubbish back home with you. In your home country modern recycling facilities exist – on the Maldives they don't. If you brought a full tube of sun-cream with you, then take the empty one back with you and dispose of it back home in the correct way.

▶ **Do your bit to keep this paradise clean!**





Cigarettes

Do not throw away cigarette stubs. It takes more than 200 years for a cigarette filter to be decomposed by nature. Before then turtles and other nosy animals will have eaten them and will have suffered a horrendous death because of it. Set an example, whether you are on the beach or a dive boat.

▶ **Do not throw any cigarette stubs away!**



Energy

Every little bit of electricity in your bungalow will have been generated by a diesel engine on the island. Do your bit to save energy and reduce the strain on the environment. Only use the air-conditioning if you really need it. Turn out the light on the terrace at night and reduce the activity of your fridge. If you brought any equipment such as battery chargers with you, then use them sparingly.

▶ **Please save energy!**



Water

Every drop of fresh water has to be produced by a freshwater plant, which is situated on your island. Fresh water is one of the most valued commodities on the Maldives. It takes a great deal of energy to turn saltwater into fresh water. Do your bit to save water. For example, do not let the water run during shaving and do not shower any longer than necessary. Each towel that is being washed uses valuable fresh water too. In addition each wash uses a large amount of washing powder which afterwards is flushed into the sea. Use towels more than once. The burden of waste water poses one of the biggest threats to the coral reefs.

▶ **Please save water!**



Divers and Snorkellers

We the divers and snorkellers should always set an example. We have the greatest interest in the protection of the underwater world. We behave accordingly: we only touch with our eyes. Even when we take videos or photographs we do not touch anything, nor do we bother any living creature. We always behave as a guest underwater. We stabilise ourselves perfectly and we watch the movement of our flippers. Our equipment too is always tidy, so that small parts cannot cause unintentional damage. Our code teaches us to protect this paradise and to inform others of our rules of conduct.

▶ **As a diver or snorkeller be a model!**



Basic Principles

The government of the Maldives has recognised that the protection of this unique natural wonder must have first priority. Help to retain the natural wonder of the Maldives. You, as a tourist, have the opportunity to actively participate in the preservation of the Maldives. Every tourist, every native Maldivian, every animal and, most of all, future generations will thank you for it.

Be a leader in the embodiment of these thoughts. Only if we all work together can we reach our goal: the preservation of the natural wonder of the Maldives.

Thank you very much for your co-operation!