

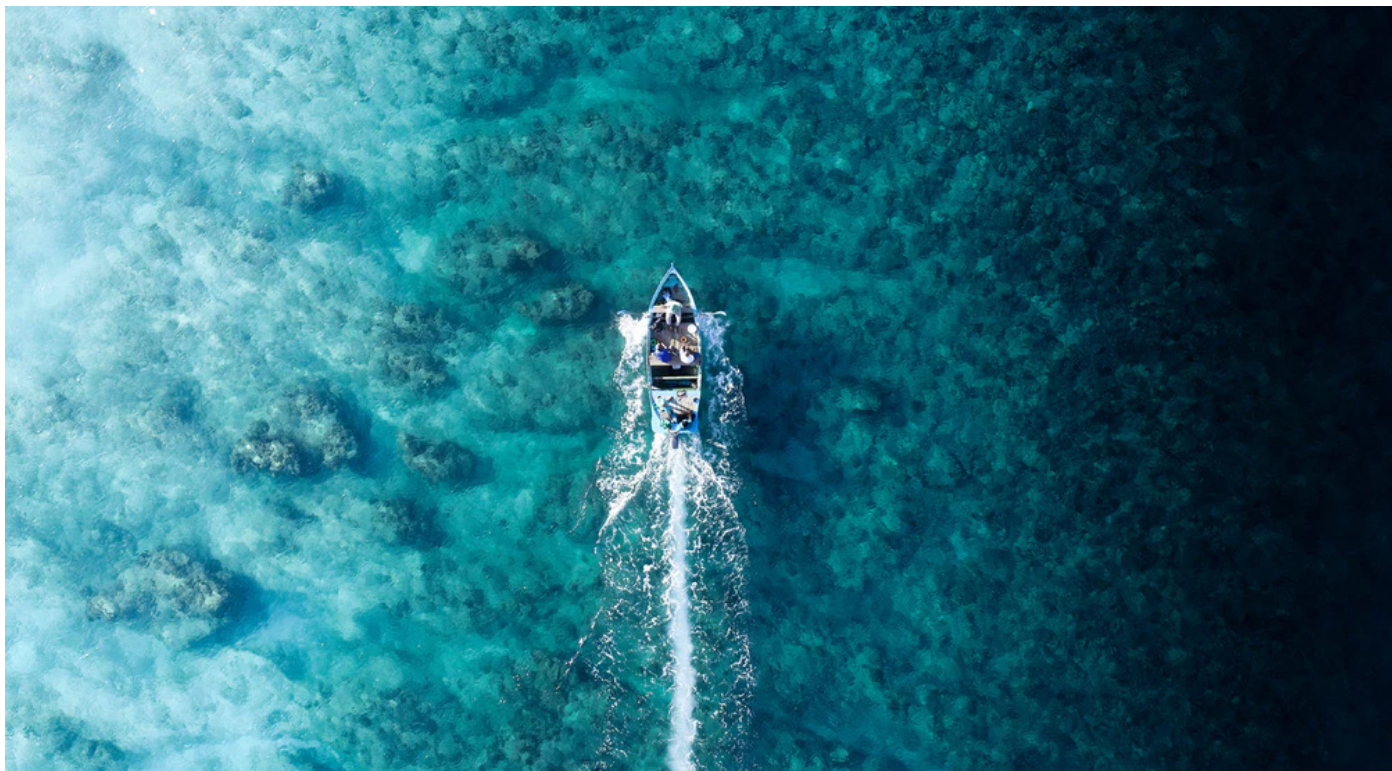
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by NBAM

National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM)

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The event commenced with the unveiling of the logo for the 75th anniversary of the British Loyalty wreck. This was followed by a cultural dance and a speech by the Addu City Mayor, Mr. Abdulla Sadiq. The Minister of Tourism, Honorable Dr. Abdulla Mausoom also gave a speech which was followed by...

P:03

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January 1st also marked the launching of Maldives Border Miles loyalty program. Tourists can register on the program and start earning points by travelling to Maldives from 1st January 2021 onwards...

P:04

President Launches 'Maldives Tourism Bulletin' Magazine

On January, 1st, 2021, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih launched the first issue of "Maldives Tourism Bulletin" – a tourism magazine published by the Ministry of Tourism.

Announcing the launch in a tweet, President Solih stated that he is confident that the magazine would prove useful for industry stakeholders, students and visitors.

President Solih also contributed to the foreword of the first issue. He stated, "I am confident that in 2021 we will continue to see the industry strengthen as the Maldives and the world recovers. I am proud to launch..."

P:05

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Maldives Listed Amongst Lonely Planet's Top Six Destinations to Travel in 2021



A survey conducted by Booking.com among nearly 21,000 participants has indicated that a massive 94% of US travelers spent their time in lockdown looking for vacation inspiration, while an Airbnb survey of 1,000+ US adults revealed that more than a third daydreamed daily about the places they would travel to once restrictions eased.

In this regard, Lonely Planet has compiled a list of the top six destinations

travelers are looking forward to traveling to in 2021 and Maldives, undoubtedly, is on the list.

In surveys and search results alike, the remote archipelago famed for its pristine beaches and lively underwater ecosystem is trending high. Named the top destination for 2021 by Club Med per Google search data, it also made Expedia's list of the most-searched destinations for 2021, coming in at number 11, with the island of Maafushi, part of the Kaafu Atoll, featuring on Airbnb's list of top trending destinations based on search results for travel in 2021. Joining the list are Italy, Mexico, South Korea, Great Smoky Mountains and Las Vegas.

Maldives has been reopened for travelers since 15th July 2020, and it has also been the receiver of several international recognitions and accolades including the World's Leading Destination at the World Travel Awards 2020. Resorts, liveaboards, guesthouses and hotels are now open, even in the greater Male' region.

Before traveling to Maldives, a negative PCR test conducted within 96 hours prior to departure, and an online health declaration form submitted within 24 hours prior to departure are needed. On arrival, all tourists are granted a 30-day free visa.

Astrabon Announces Special Year-End Sale for Liveboard Operators: 20 – 25% OFF



Astrabon Pvt Ltd is bringing the year 2020 to a close with special discounted rates on its vast range of products for Liveaboards and Safari Boats.

According to the company, liveboard and safari boat operators will be offered a 20-25% discount on all the quality products available at the store during this special year-end sale.

Established in 2002 by CEO of Capital Travel & Tours Yoosuf Riffath with the aim of providing the highest quality household appliances picked from the finest manufacturers around the world, Astrabon operates under Capital Group, a network of companies owned and managed by Capital Travel & Tours. Today, with more than 15 years of experience in the industry, Astrabon supplies almost 95% of the country's tourist establishments such as numerous luxury resorts and hotels, with an exclusive range of high-class finery in kitchenware, as well as F&B-related products.

Astrabon's product portfolio includes buffet ware, cutlery, glassware, kitchenware, restaurant-bar accessories, room appliances, as well as industrial equipment. The company is the exclusive distributor of a number of top European brands including Pujadas, Vicrila and Cartec from Spain, Bron Coucke, Santos and MATFER from France, Felix Solingen, Giesser Messer, Bartscher and Neumärker from Germany, Agnelli, De'Longhi, Eme and Rivolta from Italy, Athena from the UK, as well as Tango from Australia, RAK Porcelain from Dubai, Güral Porselen from Turkey, and Baralee ceramics from Thailand.

All Astrabon products are ISO- and NFS-certified, complying with international health and hygiene standards, to ensure that that customers receive excellence in quality.

Visit Astrabon online store for more details and enjoy great discounts: <https://www.astrabon.net/>

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The event commenced with the unveiling of the logo for the 75th anniversary of the British Loyalty wreck. This was followed by a cultural dance and a speech by the Addu City Mayor, Mr. Abdulla Sadiq. The Minister of Tourism, Honorable Dr. Abdulla Mausoom also gave a speech which was followed by a cultural activity and the handing over of the British Loyalty model to the Addu City Mayor. After this, the divers and the VIP's traveled to the shipwreck for the special diving event which was concluded with a special group photo, and the handing over of the certificate of participation to the divers by Mr. Abdulla Sadiq and Honorable Dr. Abdulla Mausoom.

The day marks the 75th anniversary of the sinking of the World War II oil tanker in Addu City. The British Loyalty Wreck, which is the biggest shipwreck in Maldives, lies 33 meters underwater between the islands Maradhoo and Hithadhoo. Over the years, it has garnered a lot of attention and popularity as a diving destination among both locals and tourists and has come to be one of the best dive sites in the Maldives. The ship is enveloped with hard and soft corals that are home to many small fishes. It is also surrounded by groups of local fishes, including blue-fin jack and turtles that swim around the ship. Every so often, the divers also find manta rays and sharks around the ship.

Additionally, it is notable that this wreck has been declared a protected area by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of Maldives in 2018. This was done to preserve the natural beauty and surroundings.

Visit Maldives Highlights the Achievements of 2020 and Touches on Future Promotional Plans



Visit Maldives has held a press conference with the local media, highlighting the activities carried out and the achievements accomplished by Maldives in the year 2020 along with the plans for the year 2021.

The initial marketing plan for the year by Visit Maldives was developed with bigger brand visibility campaigns and creative initiatives to promote experiential tourism and niche segments. However, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the campaigns and initiatives had to be shifted to social and digital media platforms. Visit Maldives was completely shifted online and with progressions, continuous assessments were conducted around the evolving challenges in three phases: React, Rethink and Recover.

In this regard, these three phases focused on keeping the destination visible on online media, providing the tourism industry and tourists with regular updates on travel restrictions and safety measures taken in Maldives, and promoting the destination as a safe haven for tourists via several activities in different source markets. Out of 412 activities, 314 activities were carried out under the crisis plan. Despite the

Maldives reopening for all nationalities in July 2020, the arrivals were also dependent on factors such as travel restrictions in their residing countries, as well as the resumption of flight connectivity.

Immersive content to dream about the Maldives and keep the destination visible was also disseminated through these platforms. As the pandemic exacerbated, the marketing approach was adapted in line with the key messaging of UNWTO: staying home today means traveling tomorrow. The second phase involved informing all relevant stakeholders on the steps taken by the Maldives for recovery such as the health and hygiene measures planned, as well as the social distancing regulations. Moving forward in the final phase of recovery, it is imperative to retain the brand awareness as the most preferred destination in the world. Steps taken for travelling to the Maldives in the new normal were communicated as much as possible through PR representatives in the key source markets and industry stakeholders, as well as several marketing campaigns.

The Managing Director of Visit Maldives, Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed, remarked, "We have consistently worked together with the government, stakeholders and tourism industry to ensure the maximum utilization of our potential and resources in achieving our goals. The team at Visit Maldives has worked tirelessly to warrant that Maldives remains on top of the most preferred tourist destinations in the world. Gradually, our efforts seem to bear fruit: we have received 16 awards and accolades this year, including the World's Leading Destination award by World Travel Awards 2020, and we have also reached the 500,000th tourist arrival milestone for the year."

Visit Maldives will continue marketing the destination with an increased vigor and effort in the upcoming year, and 343 major activities have been planned which includes both offline and online campaigns. The main objective of these activities is to increase tourist arrival numbers to pre-pandemic levels, reorient the perception of Maldives solely as a luxury and honeymoon destination, and utilize international recognition received during this pivotal moment. Further to this, an importance will be placed upon developing and promoting local tourism, culture and heritage of Maldives.

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January 1 also marked the launching of Maldives Border Miles loyalty program. Tourists can register on the program and start earning points by travelling to Maldives from 1st January 2021 onwards. Once a tourist is registered as a member of the program, they will earn points based on the duration of stay, visits to celebrate special occasions, visits on local occasions of Maldives, frequency of visits, and other aspects. The lucky first visitor was granted the first Maldives Border Miles loyalty card (Aida, Bronze tier) by the Controller General of Maldives, Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Hussain, which entitles him to countless benefits and rewards with each border crossing.

He was also gifted a holiday voucher of a 7-night stay at double room on a full board basis at Sun Island Resort & Spa, which was presented by the Managing Director of Maldives, Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed. Additionally, the Ministry of Tourism and MACL also presented him with special gifts.

Despite the challenging year (due to the COVID-19 pandemic), Visit Maldives team worked tirelessly to warrant that Maldives remains one of the safest and most preferred tourist destinations. Working together with the government, stakeholders and the tourism industry paved the way for overcoming these obstacles more efficiently, especially after the reopening of borders in July 2020. Successfully, Maldives received over 550,000 tourists this year, as well as won the prestigious title of the "World's Leading Destination" awarded by World Travel Awards 2020.

Visit Maldives will undoubtedly continue marketing the destination with increased vigor in the upcoming year. Several marketing activities have been planned which aims to increase tourist arrival numbers to pre-pandemic levels. In addition, Visit Maldives plans to reorient the perception of Maldives solely as a luxury and honeymoon destination and utilize international recognition and accolades received during 2020. Further to this, an emphasis will be given upon developing and promoting local tourism, culture and heritage of Maldives.

The Managing Director of Visit Maldives, Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed, remarked, "We are extremely pleased to greet the first visitor of 2021. After a hectic year, we are thrilled to have entered this stage where we are welcoming the first of many visitors. We want to ensure everyone that we will work hard to promote and market the destination and reach our targets for the year. Thank you everyone and we wish you a very Happy New Year!".

Freedive Kelaa to Host Freediving Workshop 'Pulse'



A freediving workshop, titled, 'Pulse' has been organized by Freedive Kelaa, a local free dive training centre, to be held from January 10-18, 2021.

The workshop is specially programmed and open for entry level free divers to improve on their skills such as relaxation, stretching for depth and equalisation, taught earlier in freediving level 1 or 2 courses. The honing of these skills will enable divers to dive even further into the scenic underwater abyss.

Dive sessions will be conducted from a boat leaving from Island Beach House, Hulhumale, by talented diving instructors; Harry Chamas, Charly Stringer and Umair Badheeu.



Harry Chamas

Harry is a freediver based in Dahab, Egypt. He has been coaching athletes for over 7 years and his athletes has made more than 30 National Records. He holds British National Records for No Limit and Variable Weight (120m and 105m).



Charly Stringer

Charly has been teaching both freediving and scuba diving for over 4 years. Furthermore, this year she is training to compete for the U.K. During her time in the Maldives, she will be training in Haa Alif Atoll, where a variety of hot dive spots and coral reefs rich in megafauna are located at.

Badheeu is the founder of Freedive Kelaa based in the northern HA. Kelaa. He has been training in the island for over two years. In 2020, he competed in an international diving event in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt and did National Record in Constant Bi fin (57m).

Freedive Kelaa also invites divers to join Harry Chamas at Kelaa Island during this February for personal coaching and depth training. As limited spots are available for training, visit: www.freedivepassion.com to book and for latest information.

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Maldives Launches NooRaajje Programme in Partnership with Blue Prosperity Coalition



The Government of Maldives has kicked-off 'NooRaajje' programme in partnership with the Blue Prosperity Coalition.

Launched on December 16, the programme consists of five years' worth of projects to gain deeper scientific knowledge of the Maldives ocean, while building up Maldivians' capacity to conserve their marine ecosystems, stated the government. With the participation of

various government officials, the event featured remarks by President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih; Minister of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, Zaha Waheed; Minister of Economic Development, Uz. Fayyaz Ismail; and Hana Amir, a lead marine biologist at the Maldives Marine Research Institute (MMRI). During the President's speech, he highlighted our dependence on it for our livelihoods and economy. As it being the reason why, the President remarked, he entered the Maldives into a partnership with the Blue Prosperity Coalition, during his visit to New York in September 2019, to attend the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The President reiterated that implementing a Blue Economy that balances economic prosperity with environmental sustainability is a key pledge of this Administration.

The NooRaajje programme will run from 2020 through 2024. Among key aims, the programme will help the Government implement a legally binding Maritime Spatial Plan spanning the Maldives 'Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ); and advance efforts to designate at least 20 per cent of the Maldives' ocean as protected areas. To follow more on NooRaajje updates, visit their website: nooraajje.org or twitter @NooRaajje.

President Launches 'Maldives Tourism Bulletin' Magazine



On 1 January 2021, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih launched the first issue of "Maldives Tourism Bulletin" – a tourism magazine published by the Ministry of Tourism.

Announcing the launch in a tweet, President Solih stated that he is confident that the magazine would prove useful for industry stakeholders, students and visitors.

President Solih also contributed to the foreword of the first issue. He stated, "I am confident that in 2021 we will continue to see the industry strengthen as the Maldives and the world recovers. I am proud to launch this magazine which showcases the enduring strengths of the Maldives brand and outlines how we intend to take the industry forward in the years to come." He also expressed his optimism that we will continue to see the tourism sector strengthen as the Maldives, and the world, recover in 2021.

The Minister of Tourism, Dr. Abdulla Mausoom also issued a statement expressing his positivity towards a favorable year for tourism and related investments in the country. "The 10th amendment to Maldives Tourism Act opens many golden opportunities for new investments. Last night we started the countdown for the "Golden2022", the Golden Jubilee of Maldives tourism, that will be celebrated throughout the Year 2022."

The magazine can be downloaded at tourism.gov.mv/en/news/maldives_tourism_bulletin

Travel Connections Maldives Pvt Ltd Wins 'Maldives' Best Tour Operator' Award



During a Virtual Gala Ceremony held on 28th December 2020, Travel Connections Maldives Pvt Ltd (TCM) was awarded the "Maldives' Best Tour Operator" award by International Travel Awards 2020.

International Travel Awards is organized by KSA Tourism Marketing & PR Company, having over a decade of experience in promoting and branding over 5,000+ global tourism brands around the world. It is a well-established company in the travel and tourism industry offering international recognition as voted by guests, travelers, and industry players alike. Over 100,000 international travelers and tourism industry professionals vote to select the winners.

Founded in 2008, TCM has strived to serve in the best possible fashion to both partners and their customers, alike, since their inception. The team at TCM is specialized in numerous holiday getaways and has carved a niche of their own with their relentless efforts to provide the best of the memories to their customers in all segments of travel.

The Chief Executive Officer of TCM, Mohamed Mirsaad stated, "Travel Connection Maldives is truly gratified and honored to be awarded as the Maldives' Best Tour Operator 2020 from the most prestigious and well renowned World Travel Awards. We appreciate everyone who aided us to achieve this honorable award. Thank you all for your support. With this award, we will continue to inspire our clients to travel with a company that puts sustainability front of mind. We know that this has been a challenging time for the travel industry. We would like to express our appreciation and assure you that we will strive hard to provide you with the best holiday and the best memories in the world."

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NBAM Member Boats Permitted to Restart Operations (as of 5th January 2021)



Since the restart of Tourism Operations in Maldives in July, 15th, 2020, Ministry of Tourism has permitted 62 NBAM Member Liveaboards to restart operations as of January, 5th, 2021. Below is the list of the Liveaboards:

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| - Maavahi | - Horizon 2 | - Sachika | - Princess Haleema |
| - Searex | - White Sand | - Alice | - Azalea Cruise |
| - Gurahali | - Sunkissed | - Island Safari 1 | - Handhufalhi |
| - Koimala | - Atoll Jade | - Island Safari 2 | - Handy Cruise |
| - Seafarer | - Dhinasha | - Maldiviana | - Soleil |
| - Blue Shark 2 | - Soneva in Aqua | - Marselia Star | - Iruvai |
| - Gahaa | - Noah | - Honors Legacy | - Soleil 2 |
| - Gulfaam | - Fascination Maldives | - Blue Shark 1 | - Princess Noor |
| - Sea Coral | - Searex | - Assidha | - Princess Haseena |
| - Leo | - Ritrella | - Carpe Novo | - Searose |
| - Handhu | - Emperor Leo | - Carpe Diem | - Duke of York |
| - Soleil | - Emperor Atoll | - Carpe Vita | - Duplex Cruise |
| - Soleil 2 | - Emperor Serenity | - Scubaspa Ying | - Equator |
| - Adora | - Emperor Explorer | - Scubaspa Yang | - Conte Max |
| - Princess Dhonkamana | - Emperor Virgo | - Ocean One | |
| - Horizon 3 | - Emperor Voyager | - Moonimaa | |

