

# Maldives Adventure Information



## Arriving Into Male

Male airport is very small. There is an international terminal and a domestic terminal once you get through customs. You end up in an undercover outdoor arrivals area which is usually very crowded. There will be loads of people with signs up and lots and lots of individual desks which are for the resort islands.

Someone from Perla Dhangethi will be at the arrivals area with a sign waiting for you (normally to your left near Costa Coffee). They will give you all the info about when to be ready for the speedboat transfer and where to get it from. The speedboat jetty is right across the road from the international terminal, takes minutes to walk to.

The international terminal has a few fast food places to grab coffee and snacks, the domestic terminal (a few minutes walk if you turn right in the terminal) has a KFC, Costa and air conditioning upstairs.

There is a small pharmacy and shop in the terminal, there are also a couple of phone shops (as you walk to the domestic terminal) if anyone wants to get a SIM card. We have been told that there is someone at the airport telling you that you MUST buy local currency and that Dhangethi doesn't accept USD - this is totally not true. Feel free to get local currency if you wish, but USD is accepted on Dhangethi almost everywhere.

Some of you may have a bit of a wait from when you arrive to when the speedboat leaves. There is a bag drop if you wanted to head off a bit further to explore but it is pretty pricey and normally really busy. If you are already sweating from the 30 degree heat and the humidity - take this opportunity to change into some summer clothes before getting on the speedboat.

## UMUGA Forms

This is the form that everyone must complete within 96 hours of arriving in the Maldives and departing the Maldives. This is just a travel declaration form and is free, but you have to do it for each person. It doesn't need to be printed, just save it or screenshot it on your phone as it generates a QR code.

This is the link for it and you will not be able to board your flight if you haven't done this form. I will be reminding people to do this form before each hub and resending the link out so don't panic.

<https://travel.immigration.gov.mv/>

## Departing Dhangethi

Perla will discuss with you the return speedboat time during the hub and book you onto the appropriate boat. You may find you have a few hours to kill at Male airport before your flight.

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## Speedboat Transfer

You don't have to worry about booking yourselves onto the speedboat as Siro will have done this for you. You will automatically get booked onto the speedboat closest to your flight arrival time unless you advise otherwise. Please remember that the speedboat MAY be delayed if the weather is bad.

Your luggage will be undercover for the speedboat ride so don't panic about it getting wet. You may want to keep some sea sickness tablets close by just in case it's choppy.

The speedboat takes between 1.5-2hrs to get to Dhangethi. Depending on who else is on the speedboat, it may stop once or twice before getting to Dhangethi but this will likely be towards the end of the journey.

Once you arrive in Dhangethi you will be met in the marina by my family and the Perla staff who will take your luggage for you. You will then walk to Perla which is about a 2-3 minute walk.

## Perla Accommodation

Perla is run by Siro and his wife, Ihkko. They have a beautiful 2 year old daughter called Liv, and Siro's mum, Haleema, is always around as well (although her English isn't great).

Siro's right hand man is a guy called Ali. Siro and Ali will be our main guides on all of the excursions, they are really knowledgeable, helpful and friendly. The main skipper of the boat is Naadey, his English isn't very good but he is a great skipper and keeps an eye on everyone from the boat, plucks people out of the water who are struggling and is generally the "eyes above the water".

The rooms are small but comfortable. Each room is ensuite with a walk in shower or shower/bath and towels are provided. You will also have a mini fridge, kettle, tea and coffee in the room. There will also be a couple of bottles of water in the fridge as the water out of the tap isn't drinkable unfortunately, these will be filled daily. The rooms are cleaned daily and the staff will also do your laundry for you if required.

There is a pool at the accommodation, but it's not big and there is not really a shallow end. It's perfect for a quick cool off and dunk and most of the time we jumped in the pool after we had been out on the boat. Perla will provide you with beach towels as well for the duration of the hub. These are collected at reception for use at the beach or the pool, and they will also be taken by the guides onto the boat for every boat trip.

In each of the respective WhatsApp groups, Siro, Ihkko and Ali will also be included. This is really for any issues you may have on arrival in Male, but also for sharing photographs, excursion details / timings and general info.

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## The Island

Perla is located on the main street on Dhangethi. The main street runs from the marina through to the jetty. The “roads” on Dhangethi are compacted sand and most of the traffic is scooters or pedestrians. The island is a whopping 350m wide and just under 1km long.

There is a gym on the island for anyone that wants to work out while they are there. There are a few shops on the main street, some for souvenirs and some for food / snacks.

Perla is also hoping to have its spa open for when we arrive, offering massages etc, I will get the price list for this before we arrive hopefully.

Tourists are not allowed to wear traditional western swimwear at any other beach other than the tourist beach, aka “Bikini Beach”. This is located on the south of the island and takes about 5 mins to walk there from Perla. You can snorkel directly from the beach out to the reef, the moon chair is there and also a small watersports centre where you can hire kayaks and a small sailing dinghy. There are limited beach chairs as it never gets very busy and no umbrellas for shade...the only shade is some trees/bushes a bit set back from the water.

## Respecting the Maldivian Culture

The Maldives are a muslim country, therefore we do need to be respectful of their culture when we visit.

Wearing appropriate clothing is the biggest part. Inside the gates of Perla, you can wear normal western clothing and swimwear in the pool. Outside the gates of Perla, walking to the Bikini Beach and walking to the marina, you must cover up.

Men must wear T-Shirts or vests and shorts. Women must wear something over the top of swimwear and skirt / shorts. The covering items cannot be see-through, sheer or have holes in. Children also need to cover up when walking around.

You will also hear the Call to Prayer multiple times during the day. The first one is at dawn and it happens around 5 times a day. When you first arrive, the dawn call to prayer will likely wake you up so if you are a light sleeper then bring earplugs.

Please remember as well that the local islands of the Maldives are “dry”. This means that you cannot buy or consume alcohol on the island. The guesthouse as well as the shops tend to sell 0% Heineken and possibly some other brands if required.

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## Ramadan

Ramadan is running during the last hub:

From the evening of Friday 28th February through to sundown Saturday 29th March.

The biggest difference during Ramadan is with eating, drinking and smoking in public. Once outside the gates of Perla, please refrain from eating, drinking and smoking in the streets and around the locals. Once on the boat or on the bikini beach it's fine.

The call to prayer during Ramadan is also louder and longer, so please be prepared for this with earplugs for sleeping if you are a light sleeper.

## Money

There is no need to buy local Maldivian currency, USD is accepted everywhere (except the medical centre) so just bring this along. There is one ATM on the island that dispenses Maldivian Rufiyaa should you need to get some extra cash out.

This is definitely the place where they prefer cash if possible, as they have huge credit card fees. However, they will only accept crisp, completely undamaged USD bills as they cannot exchange damaged, creased, ripped bills at all. If you can order brand new dollar bills then please do this, then avoid folding them if at all possible. The reason for this is because they get a better rate of exchange when converting to local currency with cash, especially if the dollar bill is a \$50 or a \$100 note. If money goes into their bank via card payment, or transfer, they have a limit as to how much they can withdraw in USD.

Your accommodation balance is due on arrival. I know some of you don't really want to travel with lots of cash, but please bring some in cash if you don't want to bring it all. Cash is definitely appreciated. Any other expenses you incur at the guesthouse can go on a tab and paid at the end of the hub, for example drinks, lunches etc.

## Itinerary

We work on a very flexible, loose itinerary, it's the only way it works. We keep it flexible in case of weather issues, illnesses, sightings and also if we think people aren't ready for the big trips. There will be a white board up in our restaurant letting you know what is planned for the next few days, but please remember to be flexible.

We also need to allow time in the itinerary for people to just chill out and have some down time, as well as for people that want to do some diving.

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## Snorkelling Trips

The snorkeling trips are an amazing underwater experience. There are so many reefs around Dhangethi ranging in depth...some are less than 1m deep and some 4-5m deep.

The first snorkelling session of the itinerary is just off the local jetty. This serves multiple purposes. It gives everyone the chance to test out any new kit they have purchased, it gives you a chance to test out any kit you have borrowed from Perla, and it gives us and the Perla staff an idea of everyone's abilities. The water is so clear and warm and for most of you it will be the first introduction to snorkeling in the Indian Ocean.

Please remember the guides that come in the water with us are not there to lifeguard / supervise your children, but they of course would step in if anything went wrong (as, I'm sure, would any competent parent).

## Diving

For those of you considering diving, this is definitely one of the best places in the world to do it.

Fazal is the head guide of Fathu Diving and he will come and meet you all during the hub. We don't need to book diving in advance, it's very much a day by day thing on the island. I will make sure we leave enough gaps in the itinerary for people that want to dive.

These are just some of the options available:

- Bubblemaker is available for 8-9 year olds
- Discovery Dives available to uncertified divers from age 10+
- Junior PADI Open Water Certification is for 10-15 year olds
- PADI Open Water Certification is for 16+
- Regular dives for certified divers from age 10+

If you are looking to do your PADI certification then please get in touch asap as it may be best to get your theory done in advance to save time on the hub, then you can go straight into the lagoon part of the training and it will also save you money to do it online before the hub starts.

I will get the updated price list for 2025 and post it on the group once I have it.

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## Food

Breakfast and Dinner will be buffet style served in the restaurant in Perla. If you have a preference on T-Bags then I would suggest bringing some of those with you. I think they only have traditional English tea available.

Water will be provided for breakfast and dinner, but anything else needs to be purchased. Water and juice will be available on all the boat trips as well.

Gluten Intolerance - the guesthouse can get gluten free pasta, but unfortunately not gluten free bread or noodles.

Lactose Intolerance - the guesthouse can get almond milk for anyone that requires it.

There will be meat and vegetarian options available for each meal so please don't worry. I don't imagine anyone will go hungry, it just won't be traditional western food, more curry based with spices so just be prepared to try new things.

Lunch is up to you. The restaurant at Perla will be open for lunch and the menu is pretty extensive. There are also other places on the island where you can get lunch as well. We normally went to the 2 cafes on the beach called Compass and Blue Moon which were both excellent and very reasonably priced. Most of the menus are the same between the restaurants.

## Tipping

The staff at Perla will be working extremely hard to ensure these hubs run smoothly, so please bear this in mind at the end of the hub. Most people gave Siro or Ihkko an overall tip amount that covered the boat guides, housekeepers and kitchen staff and they distributed it fairly, but it's up to you what and how much you want to do. If you go out to another restaurant to eat, it is customary to tip in the Maldives so please bear that in mind.

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## Checklist

1. As soon as you have your flight information, please send it over to the guesthouse and to me so we can keep track of who will need to be booked on which speedboat.
2. Please send Siro a photo of your passport page. You can email it to him, or WhatsApp it to me and I can send it on.
3. If you require assistance with accommodation on Hulhumale before and/or after the hub, please email Ihkko as she can help organise accommodation and the transfers back to the airport again to get the boat or flight. [reservations@perladhangethi.com](mailto:reservations@perladhangethi.com)
4. If you wish to stay at Perla before and/or after the hub, please contact Siro who will give you a price and book you in. If you could let me know as well then I can keep track of the comings and goings of everyone and how many rooms we have available for people to do this.
5. Please send me your WhatsApp number as it's the best way to communicate before and during the hubs. My number is +44 7769 503282 (UK number).
6. If you think you might want to get your diving certification, let me know in advance so I can put you in touch with the diving company so you can do your theory before you arrive.
7. Please advise me of any birthdays during the hub.