

A Paradise of Our World- Maldives

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Abstract

This article gives an overview of the social, economic, religious, and political structure of the Republic of Maldives. But most importantly, it throws light at how they have developed a successful hotel and hospitality business to attract tourists from all over the world.

Keywords

Maldives, hotel, hospitality, island

Introduction

The Republic of Maldives is now considered as one of the most happening tourist destinations of the world and aptly so. The ethereal beauty of this island nation has been mesmerizing its visitors for quite some time now. The government of Maldives has given the perfect finishing touch to its tourist business by liberally opening its door to the citizens of the world. The view of this paradise now awaits at your fingertips and as you book the tickets and board the plane, believe me, you are in for a life-time experience. I had visited Maldives along with my husband in the year 2017 and I would like to give a brief account of what we experienced there.

A Paradise of Our World

So what Google is saying about the location of Maldives? ‘Maldives, officially the Republic of Maldives is an archipelagic state in the Indian subcontinent of Asia, situated in the Indian Ocean. It lies southwest of Sri Lanka and India, about 750 kilometers from the Asian continent’s mainland.’ Its capital city is Male.

The inhabitants of Maldives are followers of Islam and each of its habitable islands, whether large, medium, or small, has a mosque of its own. They follow the Islamic code of conduct

in almost every phase of their lives. The sonorous song of ‘azan’ at dawn and dusk would touch your soul as you breathe fresh air while sipping tea at your hotel balcony.

Another point that is worth mentioning is the presence of schools in the islands. These schools also serve as community welfare centers and many festivities and functions are also held there. Interestingly, the time slots of these schools are elastic and if the need arises, day-time classes can be shifted at the evenings. This becomes possible as all the students are local inhabitants, and their guardians fully co-operate whenever their children are summoned at school.

The Indian Ocean is undoubtedly the quintessential essence of Maldivian life and exerts tremendous influence in the socio-economic strata of its society. The creatures of the ocean seem to make their presence felt in their delectable spreads, in their art and crafts, their culture, their song and dance, and last but not the least in the numerous souvenir shops present in most of the islands. Speaking of souvenir shops, I felt that these shops themselves are the cynosure of attraction to many as they give a joyride to a unique, unexplored wonderworld. One may find there an exact replica of a crocodile, jellyfish, stingray, or manta ray, octopus, tortoise, dolphin, corals, and other exotic creatures of the oceanic underworld. In a nutshell, it gives a very interesting glimpse about what to expect in the next few days.



Image: Maldives Beach

Hotel and hospitality are the chief occupations of the population of this country and every island aspire to outdo the others in this aspect. Beautiful, exotic hotels and resorts adorn

these floating islands which are a treat to the eyes. These expensive hotels have all the modern amenities and excellent servicing traditions. Some of these hotels use their private planes to collect their guests right from the airport. Upon their arrival, the hotel welcomes them with garlands and coconut drinks. Splendid! Isn't it? The staffs of these hotels are encouraged to personally assist the much-valued guests and by doing so, to give them an idea of true Maldivian hospitality. There are also pocket-friendly small hotels and home stays where one can taste the local cuisines, cooked, and generously served by the burqa-clad female members of the owner's family.

Each hotel and resort try to offer different entertainments to their guests. Somewhere guests are seen to be dancing along with the beatings of traditional drums. Whereas somewhere else, guests are found to be enjoying themselves by sitting around a bonfire. Some hotels arrange for candle-lit dinner too, where a variety of local delicacies are served. And as expected, fish items dominate Maldivian cuisine. Squids, luscious crabs, freshly caught fish is prepared with the paste of local spices and condiments and are either traditionally cooked or grilled and served to the guests. Coconut drinks are quite popular and served in almost all the hotels. The guests can also go for night-fishing. Generally, the hotels arrange for the boat and crew for this purpose. There, they can experience the thrill of live fish catching in a clear, starry night. As you embark on such a journey, you can realize why it is becoming such a sensation amongst the tourists. Partying in luxury cruises is also getting popular. The tourists can also opt for other adventurous activities like exploring the very ocean by diving into it along with professional divers. Some also rent boats to enjoy the live actions of dolphins, sharks etc. Last but not the least, one can also spend quality time by collecting beautiful shells from the sands or photographing the island. In a nutshell, the place offers numerous fun-filled activities which would take your mind away from the dreary, mundane routine of ordinary life.

A unique feature of this country is that here boats and ships are the main means of communication. This might be a little puzzling for some of us, the mainland dwellers, as we are accustomed to board local train, bus, car, or bikes to reach one place from another. But here, boats and ships are the only means to travel within the country. Sometimes, boat services are temporarily adjourned due to bad weather conditions. It is resumed when the

sky becomes clear or when the ocean becomes calm. Generally, the mood of the ocean determines whether there would be water traffic or not in a certain day.

I think the people of Maldives deserve a special mention. Most of them still lead a remarkably simple life and take life as it comes. To live in an island nation comes with its own challenges. But their smile remains untarnished even after facing many ecological challenges. There is always this fear that some of their habitable islands might drown into the ocean after some years due to global warming and atmospheric pollution. Moreover, almost every year many natural disasters like cyclones and storms hit these islands and severely affect their livelihood. Almost every household has a story to tell about how at one point of time or the other, they suffered in the hands of nature. But they don't seem to mind it much. Instead, they revere nature and count their blessings. They are mainly fishermen (at least their ancestors are) -turned businessman who while making a living for themselves, is also determined to give their guests a really good time. Though they are thoroughly professional when it comes to hosting people, you can detect a genuine friendliness, kindness, certain warmth while interacting with them. And since they offer their very friendship instead of mere service, you wish to return to visit their land.

I am thankful to God for giving us the good wisdom and opportunity which guided us to visit this place at the first chance without procrastinating our plan. So, what's stopping you to gain this rich experience? Start packing your bags to visually experience your dreamland.

Reference

Google

My personal visit in Maldives in 2017

About the Author

Indrani Chowdhury is a modern Indian writer/poet who was born and raised at Guwahati in Assam. She worked as a teacher before embracing writing as her chosen vocation. Her poems have been published in various magazines and anthologies. Her own book 'Raining Drops of Rainbow Verses' got published in 2021.

