

# Emperor Explorer - Maldives

## Trip Information Sheet

### What is the ship like?

The M/V Emperor Explorer comfortably accommodates 26 passengers in 13 large double staterooms, all of which have private bathroom facilities, and 7 of which can be configured to accommodate a couple or two singles. The staterooms are located on three of the vessel's four decks. The topmost deck is the sun deck, which offers both shaded and full-sun areas for relaxation as well as massage services. The upper deck includes a lounge and bar, suites 11 & 12, staterooms 13 & 14, a small lounge area and the bridge. Forward on the upper deck is a spa tub for your enjoyment.

The large main deck contains the air-conditioned dining and lounge area, TV viewing area with DVD/CD music system, common restroom, suites 9 & 10, galley, camera charging station and a large camera table. There are two sets of stairs accessing the swim platform where two in-water ladders hang for easy access to and from the water for a refreshing swim when the vessel is at anchor. Staterooms 1-3 & 5-8 are located on the lower deck, accessed via stairs from the lounge.

The Emperor Explorer is also equipped with a wireless router providing internet connection for a fee. Cellular phone and internet access are available when in proximity to many of the islands if your phone is so equipped. Internet cards and cellular phone cards are also available for purchase at the airport. The vessel's location determines the reliability of access to the internet. The vessel uses primarily UK 3-pin electrical sockets and 220 volts AC 50Hz. No charging is allowed in the cabins when unattended – there is a charging station in the salon.

### What are the diving conditions like?

The weather in the Maldives is tropically pleasant with a year-round sea breeze. Air temperatures range from lows around 78° F (26C) to highs in the upper 80s to low 90s (30-34C). There are two distinct but mild monsoon seasons in this equatorial country and each is named after the prevailing wind direction during that time of year. The northeast monsoon runs from December to April and brings relatively consistent, fair weather, but also often brings significant currents. The southeast monsoon from May through October brings a bit more wind and occasional rain (usually short-lived), but generally not as much current.

The vessel's itineraries are designed to take advantage of the changing conditions and to provide guests the best diving for the different seasons. The visibility is usually at its peak in December and January — sometimes well over 100 feet (30 meters)! Mantas can be seen throughout the year with the best feeding-station encounters typically during the May to November timeframe. Whale sharks are also seen most every month of the year, with the highest concentration seen in the monsoon transition months of April, May, October and November. Water temperatures remain a toasty 80-85° F (27-29C) throughout the year. Most divers are comfortable with at most a 3mm wetsuit.

### **What are the diving logistics?**

All of the dives aboard the Emperor Explorer are offered at scheduled times, up to 4 times daily including 1-2 night dives per charter (weather & itinerary permitting). This is to allow adequate surface intervals, provide the option for guided dives on as many sites as possible, and to allow the vessel to travel on schedule to different locations. Please note that Maldivian regulations limit the maximum depth for all dives to 100 feet (30 meters). Given the prevalence of drift diving in the area, your dives will be done from a large custom-built diving dhoni (tender). This is no ordinary tender! The dhoni is 78.7 feet (24m) long and has ample space for all divers, cameras, and gear. There are individual gear bins for each diver, separate camera and wetsuit rinse tanks and a bathroom with toilet and hot water shower plus two fresh water showers on the dive platform. Both the air and nitrox compressors are on the dhoni as well.

### **What are the safety standards?**

To ensure your safety, the vessel requires the following of all divers:

1. All divers must be certified as open water scuba divers by an internationally recognized certification organization.
2. We recommend that divers log at least one dive within the 12 months prior to boarding the vessel, or are encouraged to participate in a refresher course on board. [Rental/Course Pricing \(PDF\)](#)
3. All divers must adhere to the buddy system.
4. All divers must log in and out of the water with a member of the diving staff.
5. A dive computer, SMB and reef hooks are required (SMB and reef hooks can be borrowed on board)
6. Dive lights are required for night dives.
7. By local regulations, decompression and solo diving are not allowed under any conditions. The maximum allowed depth is 100 feet (30 meters).
8. Diving activities must cease when the consumption of alcohol begins.
9. Please note that due to a combination of staff and equipment logistics, insurance requirements and local diving regulations, rebreathers, diver propulsion vehicles (DPVs) and multi-cylinder configurations (except for a small pony bottle) may not be used aboard Explorer Ventures Fleet vessels.
10. Dive accident insurance (DAN, DiveAssure or equivalent) is required. If you arrive without proof of a policy that covers recompression chamber treatment and medical evacuation, you'll be required to purchase a short-term policy (which has very limited coverage) valid for the duration of your stay in the Maldives. A per day policy and weekly policies are available. The cost is US\$7/day or US\$22/week (prices subject to change, due to currency fluctuations and whether it is pre-paid or paid onboard). Please note that local short-term policies may not be available for divers 75 years of age or older, so a policy must be obtained in advance of the trip. What dive equipment should I bring? The vessel provides tanks, hard weights and weight belts for your use. If you prefer to rent the rest of your equipment from us, we have all of the equipment that you will need. Please indicate on your application form what equipment (and size) you will require. Otherwise, the following items are the diver's responsibility:

- Application/liability release forms
- Certification cards • Proof of DAN (or similar) dive accident insurance (required)
- Diving log book (strongly encouraged)
- Mask \*
- Snorkel \*
- Fins \*
- Booties (if you wear them)
- Dive computer (required) \*
- Buoyancy Control Device \*
- Regulator w/alternate air source \*
- Submersible pressure and depth gauges \*
- Dive light (required for night dives)\*
- Tank Marker Lights (suggested for night dives)
- Shorty Wetsuit – 3 mm \*
- Repair kit w/ spare parts
- Safety sausage/SMB (required and complimentary)
- Reef hook (required and complimentary)

\* Available for rent on board. Rental/Course Pricing (PDF)

### **Is Nitrox available?**

Nitrox is available and included in the package price for certified nitrox divers. Please read our Nitrox page for more information.

### **What do I need to bring?**

If your trip requires a domestic flight in the Maldives, please note that the current (May 2020) baggage allowance is 25 kg (55 pounds) per passenger. The excess charge is MVR 12.00/per kg + tax (approx. \$0.36/pound) and is subject to change.

Packing for a liveaboard trip is much easier than packing for a land-based vacation. Dress aboard the vessel is very casual. The climate doesn't require much more than shorts, T-shirts, and swimsuits. Please bring at least one set of more modest clothing if visiting the town or villages. In town, local custom dictates that the body be covered from at least the shoulders to the knees, with short sleeves being preferable to sleeveless tops.

Soft luggage is recommended as it takes up very little space when empty. Reef-safe sunscreen, sunglasses, and a visor or hat are strongly recommended. In case of rough weather or if you have a

tendency toward seasickness, come prepared with motion-sickness medications or Transderm patches from your doctor. Feel free to bring your favorite CDs and DVDs.

All linens (including sheets, comforters, bath towels, hand towels and dive towels) are provided on board. Soaps and shampoo are provided.

If possible, pack your regulator, dive computer, mask, certification and dive insurance cards, swimsuit, change of clothes and necessary medications and toiletries in your carry-on bag. Having these items will make an unexpected luggage delay far more bearable.

There is a long list of items that are prohibited in the Maldives. This includes, but is not limited to firearms, narcotics, alcohol (including for personal consumption), pornography, pork products and religious idols (except for personal use). Bags are routinely searched by customs agents upon arrival.

### **What will the meals be like?**

- Please list on the application form any dietary needs you have. This form will be provided just prior to the trip.
- A complimentary glass of wine with dinner is included

Aboard the Emperor Explorer, evening meals and lunches usually consist of vegetables, rice, pasta, soup, chicken, beef or fish with occasional local specialties offered as additional options. Breakfast is the usual fare of eggs, beef bacon, sausages, pancakes, French toast, potatoes, cereal and fruit. Vegetarians are well accommodated.

If you have any dietary restrictions or requests, please indicate them on your application form. Please note that specific brands of drinks, dressings and food are often unavailable in the Maldives, and it can be very difficult for us to find low-fat, gluten-free or soy products, fresh fruit, shellfish and other items common elsewhere. Pork and pork products are not served aboard. While we will do our best to accommodate your requests, please be realistic and consider bringing some of your own foods if the lack thereof may constitute a health risk.

Water, tea, drip coffee and a glass of beer or wine with dinner is complimentary. Due to the difficulty of importing alcohol and fruit into the Maldives, additional beer or wine, freshly made juices or any hard liquor will be added to your onboard bill.

### **Will there be a phone or communication abilities on board?**

- Vital messages may be passed to guests by calling the booking office at 1.800.322.3577
- Internet access is available aboard

The local agent for Emperor Explorer can be reached from North America via phone at 011.960.768.0888, and will be able to contact the vessel. Cellular phone and internet access are available when in proximity to some of the islands if your phone is so equipped. Internet cards/access and cellular phone cards are available for purchase at the airport. Wireless routers providing internet connection are available on the vessel. The connections are based on 3G network and are good for basic emails but not fast enough for large downloads. The vessel's location does determine the reliability of access to the internet.

### **What is the currency?**

- US dollars are widely accepted
- Most major credit cards are accepted

In the Maldives, US dollars (cash) and credit cards are widely accepted, as are Euros, although change may be given in the local currency, the Rufiyaa. Be aware that obtaining foreign currency in the Maldives is very difficult, although currency exchange is available at banks in Male and at the airport. Only newer US dollars and Euros with no tears, rips or any markings will be accepted at banks, money exchangers and onboard.

### **How do I pay for on board charges?**

Your bill may be paid at the end of the trip using Visa or Mastercard (4% surcharge will be added), or cash (US dollars, Euros or Sterling). Personal or traveler's checks are not accepted on board, and we are unable to provide cash for credit card charges more than invoice amounts.

### **Is crew gratuity included in the package price of the trip?**

Crew gratuities are not included in your package. The crew works very hard, 7 days a week and many weeks at a stretch to provide the best possible service for our guests. The industry standard for crew gratuities on dive trips (if of course, you are happy with the service which you have received) is between 10% and 15% of the regular published package price per passenger. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

### **What do I need to know regarding arrival?**

- Passport required
- Valid return airline ticket
- 30-day free tourist visa issued at airport
- Arrival the day before is encouraged
- Most transfer costs are included
- Arrangements are made to pick you up

The airport code for the international airport in the Maldives is MLE. Please note that a passport is required for all visitors arriving in the Maldives. A valid return or onward airline ticket is also required. All visitors to the Maldives are issued a free 30-day visa. Americans, Canadians, and most other countries' citizens do not need an advance visa. If in doubt, please contact the nearest consulate. We encourage you to arrive at least a day early so you have a "cushion" if there are flight or luggage delays, and so that you arrive aboard refreshed.

Airport transfers on the day of embarkation and disembarkation are included in your package. If you arrive on boat departure day, you will be met by a boat representative wearing an Emperor Maldives T-shirt and holding a sign displaying Emperor Maldives. Emperor Explorer arranged transfers depart the airport to the boat at 11:00 am, 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm and are free of charge. Guests who use the 11:00

am transfer accept that the boat will not be fully cleaned or ready. A light sandwich style snack will be provided for lunch. Our airport representative will be happy to help you, however please note that boarding may not be possible before 1:00pm. If you arrive after the last transfer, water taxis are available for around \$15. If you arrive prior to boat departure day and your trip starts in Male, you should plan on returning to the airport for the 4:00 pm transfer by dhoni to the Emperor Explorer. The dhoni ride from the airport to the vessel is about 15 minutes. If you arrive prior to boat departure day and you have a domestic flight at the beginning of the trip, you should plan on meeting the representative at the domestic airport an hour and a half prior to departure time of the domestic flight.

### **What if our flight is delayed?**

If you miss any of your flights and are not able to make it to the Emperor Explorer on schedule, please call the USA booking office at 1.800.322.3577 (US/Canada) or call or WhatsApp the local contact's cell 011.960.768.0888 or the local General Manager's cell 011.960.799.6657. Notify the crew of your updated arrival time should you have that information, and where you may be reached in the meantime. When should I schedule my departure flight? The Emperor Explorer arrives at its final destination port on the afternoon of the day prior to disembarkation. An optional land visit may be offered on the final afternoon for itineraries ending near Male. Passengers spend the final night and have breakfast prior to disembarking at 7:00 am. There will be sufficient time to catch a commercial flight out at any time on the day of disembarkation. The dhoni will take you and your luggage to the airport after breakfast (or earlier if you have an early flight). If you have a flight late in the afternoon or in the evening, the airport hotel offers luggage storage and pool/beach/shower use for the day for a fee. If you'll be staying at one of the outlying resorts after the charter, the dhoni will take you back to the airport so you may meet your resort's transfer.

### **What are the recommended hotels?**

For pre/post trip accommodations (one or two nights), we recommend the following:

Hulhule Island Hotel [www.hih.com.mv](http://www.hih.com.mv)

Hotel 78 [www.hotel78maldives.com](http://www.hotel78maldives.com)

Fern Boquete [www.fernboqueteinn.com](http://www.fernboqueteinn.com)

Ocean Grand Hotel [www.oceangrandmaldives.com](http://www.oceangrandmaldives.com)

### **What are the package information specifics?**

Package Includes:

- 10 nights/11 days aboard vessel
- 3 meals daily, plus snacks
- Up to 4 dives daily (weather and itinerary permitting)
- Air fills, weights and belts
- Nitrox fills for certified divers

- Scheduled airport transfers on the days of embarkation/disembarkation
- Water, tea, drip coffee and a glass of beer or wine with dinner are complimentary
- Optional land visit
- Beach barbecue (weather permitting)
- Maldivian GST (General Service Tax)
- Government Green Tax

Package Does Not Include:

- Rental, instruction and retail charges
- Soft drinks, fresh juices and alcohol (cocktails, liquors, wine and beer)
- Crew gratuities
- Dive accident insurance (required)
- Trip insurance (recommended)
- Hanifaru Snorkeling Permit (if applicable)
- Itinerary surcharges (if applicable)
- Extra Onboard Charges