

Read Before You Leave



Self-Declaration Medical Form / Doctors Approval

All divers will be required to complete a self-declaration medical form upon arrival onboard Arora Virgo. You can find and view this medical form on our website www.aroramaldives.com or we can email it to you directly. If you are taking part in a PADI course you will also need to sign a PADI Diver Medical. If you have, or think you have, any of the medical conditions listed you will need signed clearance from a doctor valid within 12 months of the end of your liveaboard booking or start of diving course. You must obtain this before arrival to the vessel (easiest before arrival to the Maldives) and bring with you in order to be able to dive. Failure to do so will result in you being unable to participate in any diving activity. No refund or compensation will be offered due to lack of diving medical approval upon arrival. A self-declaration medical form means no **proof** of medical history is required, but be aware that any questions answered untruthfully which may result in injury or incident during your trip, may not be covered by your dive/travel insurance and is not the liability of Arora Maldives.

Maldives diving information

Diving in the Maldives: The maximum depth for diving in the Maldives is 30 metres. Your maximum diving depth will be dependent on your level of training and experience. It is your responsibility to check what depths your insurance policy covers you for before your arrival and to adhere to the maximum depths of your training level and/or Maldivian regulations. Unpredictable and strong currents are to be expected anytime, but especially in periods of new and full moons. We recommend that you are certified to 30 metres and are comfortable with currents and drift dives. Decompression diving, solo diving and technical diving is strictly prohibited.

Diver Experience: All guests must hold at least an Open Water Diver certification or equivalent. On some dives the recommended depth is below 18m therefore advanced or Deep Diver training is advised. Experienced divers can dive in a buddy pair unguided. Inexperienced and beginner divers may find some dives challenging and may be asked by the Cruise Director to skip dives that are not suitable for their diving experience.

Scuba Review & Check Dive: Many certification agencies recommend a Scuba Review if it has been longer than six months since your last dive and should be completed prior to your arrival and signed by an instructor in your diving logbook. Every diver, regardless of their qualification or experience will be scheduled to dive their first dive at a local/sheltered dive site. This dive allows you to orient yourself in your diving environment and acquaint yourself with your equipment, and for the cruise director to establish diving groups. In the interests of safety, Arora Maldives reserves the right to restrict diving activities if the instructor has any concerns regarding diver safety.

The Dive Guides: For all diving sites visited our dive guides will give you a detailed and comprehensive dive briefing before you enter the water. Arora Maldives has a ratio of 6 divers to 1 guide. They will remain with the group to navigate the site and to look out for any interesting marine life to show you. The dive guide should not be expected to provide any dive training during the dive and you and your buddy dive together at your own risk.

Diving for Qualified Divers: As qualified divers you are expected to be able to dive to a standard as per the certification and experience requirements outlined. You are responsible for your own and your buddy's safety during the dive and to plan your dive and dive your plan by using a personal dive computer. You must begin, execute and end the dive with your dive buddy. Should you be a single diver a buddy will be allocated on board. There will be no diving on arrival and departure day. All divers must ensure that they leave a minimum of 24 hours between their last dive and their flight departure.

Inexperienced divers: We invite divers of all certifications and experience onboard our trips. Although our dive guides will not be held accountable for your safety, they will do their utmost to build your confidence. Please always follow the directions of your guide/instructor.

Courses: Courses are subject to availability and itinerary and can be requested before boarding or during the trip. If you are taking part in any course, you are required to sign a PADI medical form prior to starting the course. If you have, or think you have, any of the medical conditions listed you will need signed clearance from a doctor valid within 12 months of starting your course. Where doctor's clearance is needed, we ask you to arrange this before arrival where possible and to bring it with you to avoid any delays, additional costs or cancellation.

Snorkelling/Non-divers: Both snorkelers and non-divers will be required to complete a liability form at the time of check in. Snorkelling can be taken from the dhoni when an Instructor/Guide is on board to observe or unless the snorkeler is accompanied in the water by a certified diver. We ask all snorkelers to wear a floatation aid at all times. Whilst every effort will be made for non-diving guests wishing to snorkel, some itineraries or dive locations may not be permitted for safety reasons.

Travel Information

Passports & Visas: All guests must have a passport valid for at least six more months after arrival. 30-day tourist visas are issued on arrival at the immigration desk at Maldives International airport for all nationalities and are free of charge. All visitors must be in possession of a return/onward flight ticket. **BE AWARE: IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS CAN BE CHANGED WITHOUT NOTICE. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CHECK CURRENT REGULATIONS BEFORE YOUR ARRIVAL.** Failure to adhere to regulations or incidents resulting in inability to enter the country will not be entitled to compensation from Arora Maldives.

Insurance: It is a condition of your contract with Arora Maldives that you purchase comprehensive dive and travel insurance cover specific to your booking. Arora Maldives will not be responsible for any financial loss incurred by issues beyond our control such as, but not limited to; weather, 'Act of God' or changes made by the local authorities. You are responsible to check that these include:

- **Dive Injury Insurance:** covering all risks, costs and expenses likely to be incurred as a result of a diving injury, including but not limited to re-compression chamber treatment, air evacuation, and loss or damage to possessions. This insurance should cover all scuba diving or water sports activities that you are likely to undertake during your trip.

- **Medical Evacuation Insurance:** covering all risks, costs and expenses likely to arise from a diving or non-diving injury requiring your evacuation to a place of specialist care, including but not limited to low altitude air evacuation; specialist treatment and direct; and indirect losses.

- **Comprehensive Travel Insurance:** valid at the time of booking to cover any pre-departure cancellations should you have to cancel your trip for an insured reason such as illness or serious accident, any changes or cancellation to your travel plans, loss or damage to your luggage and contents. You must be satisfied that your insurance fully covers all your personal requirements including pre-existing medical conditions, cancellation charges, medical expenses and repatriation in the event of accident or illness, diving injuries and medical evacuation. If you choose to travel without adequate insurance cover, we will not be liable for any losses howsoever arising, in respect of which insurance cover would otherwise have been available.

Information about Male' (Velana International) Airport: If you have to wait for a transfer on arrival or for a connecting domestic flight, the airport is reasonably comfortable and has a shop for local SIM cards, a post office, money changer, and a few coffee shops/restaurants.

Information about Male'/Hulhumale City: Each city is a 10 minute taxi ride from Velana International Airport. Locals welcome tourists to visit and you can experience some of the culture, shopping, cafes and restaurants. Male' is a lively city centre, whereas Hulhumale is a little more slow-paced with more open spaces. Although it is not law, if you plan to visit either city or any local islands, please be respectful to the local culture and dress modestly where possible.

Transfers to and from the liveboard: Arora Maldives-arranged transfers depart from the airport to the boat at 13:00 and 16:00 and both timings are offered free of charge. If you do not wish to wait for one of the above transfers or you arrive after the last transfer, taxis are available at the airport. If you are already in the Maldives, you should make your way to the airport for the 16:00 transfer. Our boats moor in port on arrival day and overnight, departing early on the morning following the check-in day. The boat moors in port mid-afternoon the day before departure and remains in port overnight until check-out from the boat. Check out is at 07:00 and guests will be in the airport by 07:30. For guests continuing their holiday in the Maldives at a resort, hotel or another liveboard, your on-going transfers need to be arranged by you from the airport. We will not be able to arrange direct transfers from the liveboard to resorts.

Language: The national language is Dhivehi. English and other languages are widely spoken within tourist areas.

Health: Check with your local doctor for recommended vaccinations. Remember to bring any prescribed medicines and pack them in your hand-luggage when travelling. If you dive with a prescription mask, we would advise you to pack this in your hand-luggage too.

Time: 5 hours ahead of GMT. Daylight savings time is not observed in the Maldives.

Trip and boat Information

The Captain: He will decide, along with the cruise director, where you go and when. Safety is the foremost concern of our knowledgeable captain and dive team - they understand the conditions and will make the best judgement for your safety and enjoyment. The sea is a dangerous place when not respected, so please accept the alternative plan as best you can.

Itineraries & Dive Sites: All itineraries and dive sites are subject to various unpredictable changes including weather conditions, dive conditions and changes in Maldivian Government approval. Whilst Arora Maldives makes every effort to dive at top dive sites in each itinerary, we cannot guarantee diving at specific sites. In adverse weather conditions the guides and captain of the boat will have the final decision about which dive sites to visit to ensure that the guests, staff and boats safety is not compromised in any way. If in the unfortunate event that dives are missed, or dive sites are not reached due to weather conditions or other unforeseeable changes, Arora Maldives will not offer a refund or compensation.

Equipment rental: Equipment is available for rent and we ask that you request your equipment before you arrive on board. We need to know your required equipment sizes, height, weight and shoe sizes to prepare the correctly sized equipment for you. The diving dhonis have ample storage space for your equipment and there is a spares

box on board. We suggest that you bring the following: - Mask, snorkel, fins, boots, wetsuit, regulator, BCD, SMB (with a minimum of 5 metres of line to deploy during the safety stop), a dive computer and torch (with spare batteries) and a reef hook if you have one. The average water temperature is 29°C and we recommend a 3mm shorty or long wetsuit. All divers are required to use a dive computer, SMB and reef hooks for every dive and a torch each for night dives.

Tanks & Adapters: We have DIN tanks and INT adapters available on board. We strongly advise divers with M26 regulators and have adapters to fit to DIN tanks to please remember to bring your own adapter with you.

Nitrox: Arora Virgo is equipped to offer Nitrox facilities and Nitrox fills (normally 32%) are offered free of charge, subject to demand and availability. Please inform the dive guide in plenty of time to ensure that your tank is ready for your diving. If in the unfortunate event that nitrox is not available, Arora Maldives will not offer a refund or compensation.

Photo & Video equipment: Recharging facilities and rinse tanks are available on board. You are asked not to charge items in your cabin left unattended or while you sleep for safety reasons.

Cabins: All the cabins accommodate two guests either in a double-bedded cabin or twin berth cabin. Cabins are pre-sold and allocated prior to arrival. Cabin upgrades may be available onboard subject to availability.

Bathrooms: All bathrooms are equipped with a shower, sink and toilet. Please take extra care in the bathrooms not to slip and always use the shower curtain/door. Placing toilet paper down any toilet on board is not acceptable.

This not only risks blocking the system, but it also finds its way into the delicate reef systems causing irreparable damage. Wastepaper bins are provided in all bathrooms and are emptied regularly.

Hot water: Short showers are the order of the day on liveaboards as hot water is in short supply. We ask guests to shower at different times to ensure everyone enjoys a hot shower.

Electricity: 3 pin UK electrical sockets using 220 volts AC 50Hz. Electrical devices are not to be left charging unattended in any areas on board, including cabins.

Air-conditioning: All cabins have individually controlled air-conditioning. Air-conditioning uses a lot of power and energy, so we ask you to please be kind to the environment and don't leave the air conditioning on in your cabin when you are elsewhere on board. Running the air-conditioning at night will result in some noise from the engine and generator. Air conditioning cannot cause illness, but extreme differences in temperature, moisture and 'wind' environments can encourage already contracted sinus colds and other viruses/bacteria to develop by inhibiting the immune system from performing efficiently.

Hot water: Short showers are the order of the day on liveaboards as hot water is in short supply. We ask guests to shower at different times to ensure everyone enjoys a hot shower.

Housekeeping: You will be provided with a bath and hand towel, plus an additional towel for use on the sun deck. Dive towels are available on the diving dhoni and are changed every day. The housekeeping crew will clean your cabin daily, generally after your first or second dive of the day. Towels and bed linen are changed once a week. For any additional cleaning required or change of towels please speak to the guides who will be able to assist you.

Luggage: Whilst you may be advised where to store your luggage, you leave your belongings there at your own risk.

Food & Drink: The meals on board are usually buffet style with a variety of local and international dishes to suit everyone. Local food is traditionally a bit spicy, sustainable local fish is available on board. Water, tea and coffee are complimentary. Soft drinks, fresh juices and alcohol (cocktails, liquors, wine and beer) are chargeable. For any special dietary requests, such as vegetarian or any allergies, please inform us prior to arrival. We source items locally, therefore items such as, but not limited to; wholemeal pastas or flour, gluten free products or soya substitutes are not typically available.

Alcohol: Importing alcoholic beverages is prohibited by law. Bottles containing alcoholic beverages will be confiscated at Customs upon arrival and returned to you at departure. Alcohol is available to purchase on board Arora Virgo. Guests will not be permitted to dive after consuming alcohol or under the influence of a hangover as this seriously impairs your judgement and reactions to events and increases your risk of decompression sickness. If the guides deem that you are unfit to dive you will be asked to sit out the dive. Your safety and well-being are paramount so this request by the dive guides will only be made to avoid accidents.

Behaviour: Anti-social or aggressive behaviour will not be tolerated and individuals who cause a disturbance to other guests or crew may be removed from the liveaboard.

Children: Children aged 15 years or younger must be supervised by a parent or designated responsible adult at all times. Children may be accepted on board for a full or private charter, subject to consent from the group leader. Arora Maldives cannot provide a legal chaperon service.

Entertainment: There is a variety of nightly entertainment ranging from night dives, a BBQ on a local island (subject to weather conditions and the route), watching films, games nights or relaxing on the sundeck. A land visit can also be arranged in some locations, upon request.

Internet: Arora Virgo is equipped with free Wi-Fi and internet is available when a mobile signal is present. Arora Maldives provides no reimbursement for the inability to provide this service for any unforeseen reasons. Personal

SIM cards and data packages are available to purchase at the airport. Signal strength can vary which may result in intermittent and/or slow connections.

Additional information and advice

Taxes: For any services or purchases made locally a 16% sales tax and a 10% service charge is applied.

Currency accepted: All local prices are in US dollars and we will accept cash US dollars. New and undamaged notes only, no coins. Exchange services are available at the airport and in Male'/Hulhumale city. Please check exchange rates and fees before arrival - maybe the rates are better in your country of origin.

Visa and Mastercard are accepted, charged in USD and a 4% surcharge will be added. Please check with your bank regarding any international charges and exchange rates.

Tips on board: Arora Maldives believe that tips should be on a voluntary basis depending on the quality of your service from the guides and the crew. You will find an envelope in your cabin and the general recommendation is 10% of the price paid, or a minimum of 22 USD per night onboard. Please feel free to leave what you think is acceptable and it will be appreciated and equally shared between the guides and crew.

Packing; remember to bring:

- Personal clothing & toiletries
- Small medical first aid box, ear plugs are recommended if you are a light sleeper
- Prescription medicines and prescription mask if you need one (pack in your hand-luggage when travelling)
- Water-proof bags to store electronic items (land camera, passports) in case of water damage whilst on board
- Note: Hard suitcases are hard to store on board so please use roll up/collapsible style bags where possible

Essential paperwork; remember to bring:

- Logbook with your most recent dives in
- Valid diving association certification proof
- Valid travel insurance
- A copy of valid diving insurance details per person (translated in English by your insurance company if not already) stating the start and ending date of the diving cover with the exact diving insurance covered by the policy. Without this document, you will be required to purchase diving insurance locally or online before you may begin diving.
- Booking voucher and holiday details (from your travel agency if not booked directly with Emperor Maldives).

Nice to bring but not essential: Media portable drives, tablet/laptop, mobile phone, video/photo camera and chargers.

Finally: If you have never been on a liveaboard before, then expect a few adjustments from normal life to enjoy your week. Space is restricted on board any boat and on some liveaboards privacy is lessened and you will need to be prepared to share the communal toilets and showers on the dive deck although all Arora Virgo cabins have en suite facilities.

If you experience any problems during the week, please ensure that these are raised with the Cruise Director as soon as is practically possible. The Cruise Director can remedy the problem on board the majority of the time and is committed to provide the highest level of service and guest experience possible. However, if something remains unresolved please make sure you raise it with the general manager at the end of your week via direct email. With all the will in the world, problems cannot be resolved unless you highlight them. If you have any concerns, please raise them in a respectful manner. We strive to deliver a high service and are open to discussion and flexibility to accommodate personal needs and expectations where appropriate and possible!