

## SNORKELLING FACTSHEET

Updated 4th October 2024

### SNORKELLING IN THE MALDIVES

The Maldives covers an area of 90,000 sq. km and lies in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Its 1196 coral islands are grouped into 26 Atolls. Most islands surround a large ring-shaped coral reef, while others share one typical reef with just one or two islands. The reef protects the islands inside the atoll against high waves and rough seas.

The water temperature in the shallower 30-metre reef areas varies from 26 to 32 degrees Celsius throughout the year. Inside the shallow lagoon, the water temperature may reach slightly higher levels.

The abundance of marine life is a source of attraction for divers and those passionate about snorkelling. The waters around JA Manafaru are home to more than 1000 species of fish and other marine creatures, more than 500 coral species and other reef invertebrates that create the reef on which they live.

We believe warmer water temperatures throughout the Maldives negatively affect coral growth. Our island has large lagoons and a large volume of sand movement, which means the coral and marine life are centralised around the drop-offs.

What makes the Maldives special for snorkelling is the presence of rare marine life species, such as the giant Napoleon Wrasse, turtles, eels, sharks, and many more.

### LEARNING TO SNORKEL

For those who can swim comfortably, progressing to snorkelling is a relatively easy next step. The best place to start your snorkelling adventure is in the shallow and calm lagoon waters, where you can comfortably set your feet down on sand yet still be captivated by colourful marine life. For those less comfortable with swimming, a lesson with an instructor and a flotation device is the best plan. Remember that snorkelling is about moving slowly and calmly and allowing marine life to go about its daily activities.

### SNORKELLING SAFETY

The azure waters surrounding JA Manafaru beg to be explored. However, when snorkelling, there are some things you should know. The most important safety tip while snorkelling is to choose a buddy you are comfortable with and stay in sight of each other while you are out. It is not recommended to snorkel alone. Also, you should only go snorkelling if you are a confident swimmer.

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### Here are some helpful hints:

- Stay close to shore.
- Be aware of strong currents, boat traffic, seaplane traffic, and shallow areas. The team at the Water Sports Centre can provide this information.
- Retain your energy. To avoid exhaustion, consider snorkelling with a flotation device of some sort.
- Snorkelling should be relaxing, so slow and gentle is recommended.
- Do not touch marine life. Be aware of the seabed and proximity of coral. Be careful when snorkelling when the tide is going out, as coral can severely injure a snorkeler, as can snorkelers severely injure live coral.
- Check tidal movement and wave conditions before entering the water.
- Please ask the Water Sports Team for more information about snorkelling safety.
- Don't worry if you haven't brought snorkelling equipment with you. We have sets available for guest use in the Water Sports Centre. Drop by and see the staff between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

### LOW IMPACT SNORKELLING

Coral reefs are among the world's most spectacular and vitally essential habitats, and snorkelling is an excellent way to explore them. As reefs face an increasingly uncertain future, snorkelers and other coral reef visitors can play an essential role in helping to protect these fragile environments. Follow these simple guidelines to help protect the coral reefs you visit.

- Never touch coral. Corals are living animals, and even slight contact can harm them, and some corals can sting or cut you.
- Corals need sun to live, and our sunscreen can kill coral. If possible, wear UV-protective clothing instead.
- Select entry and exit points to avoid walking on or bumping into corals. Be aware of tidal movement and choose to snorkel during mid to high tides over reefs where the coral grows close to the surface.
- Maintain a comfortable distance from the reef so that you're sure you can avoid contact.
- Know where your fins are at all times, and try not to kick up sand, which can smother the coral polyps.
- Stay horizontal in the water while you're near or above the reef.
- Learn to swim without using your arms.
- Move slowly in the water — relax and take your time.
- Snorkelling pros know the natural way to enjoy the reef's beauty is to slow down, relax and watch as reef creatures go about their daily lives undisturbed.

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### SNORKELING MAP

- ① **Fishingham Palace**  
Head straight out between the 6th and 7th water villas from the end to discover a 20-meter-wide stretch of deeply fissured coral at the drop-off. Though some of the coral has been affected by warmer waters, parts are recovering and serve as a sanctuary for many lobsters, large schools of fish, and even a nurse shark that often sleeps majestically in a cave at the base, around 10 meters deep.
- ② **Jetty Giants**  
Around this jetty is a great spot for larger fish
- ③ **Nurse Sharks at Rest**  
Explore this area for caves and holes sheltering sleeping nurse sharks during the daytime
- ④ **Cuttlefish Sightings**  
Cuttle fish often spotted here - if they aren't here, try sunrise jetty

- ⑤ **Green and Hawksbill Turtles**  
This is the most extensive area of snorkelling, with interesting coral regrowth at about 4-8m, diverse fish species, and often turtles galore - both green and hawksbill.
- ⑥ **Coral Kingdom**  
Arguably, the best spot is straight out from the 4th water villa from the end, and you can enter the sea from the ladder at the end of the jetty
- ⑦ **Dive Into Beauty**  
Some good live coral structures at approximately 5-10m over the edge of the drop-off
- ⑧ **Beyond the Pink Buoy**  
An impressive area of coral with a high density of fish can be found beneath the furthest pink buoy to the left, just over the edge of the drop-off

- ⑨ **Cuttlefish Corner**  
Cuttle fish often spotted here - if they aren't here, try the 200s water villa jetty
- ⑩ **Coral Blocks and Sleeping**  
Scattered blocks and coral structures with good fish diversity, lots of anemones, and daytime sleeping holes for nurse sharks - worth exploring!
- ⑪ **Nurse Sharks in Hiding**  
Nurse sharks often sleeping tucked away in nooks and crannies around this area
- ⑫ **Dolphin Watch**  
Look out for dolphins circling the island in the mornings!



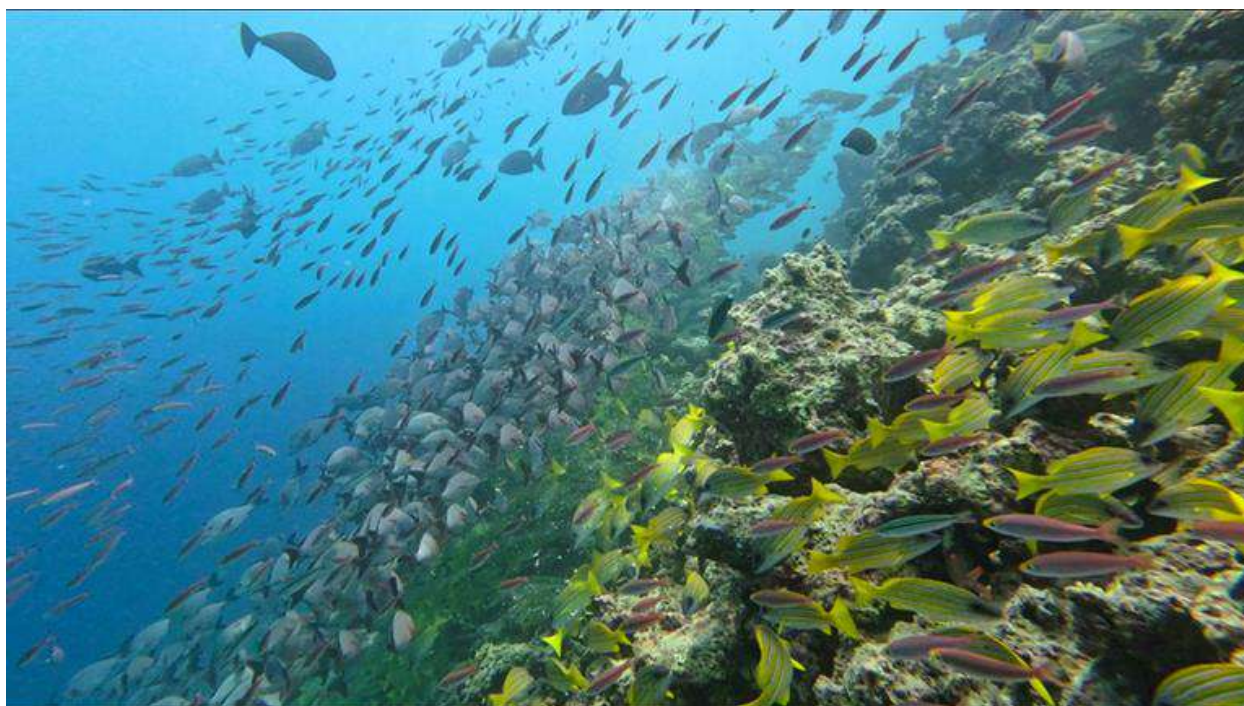
## SNORKELLING SITES

### FISHINGHAM PALACE

Water Conditions: Often in the lee of the island

Sea Floor: A long way down!

Experience Level: Intermediate



This is a snorkel for good visibility days. A reasonably leisurely five-minute swim out from your 500 series water villa, a longer swim from the beach and then parallel with the sunset water villas, or drop in at the sunset jetty and snorkel clockwise following the edge of the lagoon. You'll find some interesting snorkelling between the arrival jetty and the 500s water villa jetty so it's worth taking time to explore. As you start to round the 'pointy end' of the island, if the currents are right, you'll find yourself in the lee of the island, 'hanging' in the stillness. The drop off here is a 30m strip mass of deeply fissured coral bank. Peer through the thousands of fish – snappers, basslets, cardinals, red-toothed trigger fish, parrot fish, wrasse, etc, into the nooks and crannies for lobsters, and look downwards for the triangular cave opening with a sandy entrance where Queenie the nurse shark curls up to sleep in the daytime. If the currents are running the other way, you might find that many of the fish have decamped to Coral Kingdom at the other end of the island!



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### JETTY GIANTS

Experience Level: Suitable for swimmers who are experienced snorkellers

Entry and Exit: Arrival Jetty/Stingray Jetty out from White Orchid

Caution: Keep and eye out for boat traffic



Fab for fans of big fish, jump in at the arrival jetty. You'll be in deep water so it's not advisable for non-swimmers, but as you can enter and exit the water at the sunset jetty, there's no need to swim far. Keep an eye on overhangs and under the jetty for snoozing nurse sharks, and hope to see lots of big trevally, jacks, groupers, and barracuda if you're lucky. Keep a careful watch for boats and seaplanes!

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### CUTTLEFISH CORNER

Experience Level: Suitable for swimmers who are experienced snorkellers

Entry and Exit: Sunrise Jetty



If you've been exploring Coral Kingdom, follow up with a leisurely swim anti-clockwise to the sunrise jetty, or simply enter the ocean here. Have a look under the jetty for sleeping nurse sharks and as you emerge into the light, keep your fingers crossed for the scrolling colours of a shoal of cuttle fish reflecting the sunshine. They are so beautiful and graceful, and they'll let you hang about with them while they dart and glide around you. If you don't find them here, try either of the water villa jetties where they also frequently hang out.

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### CORAL KINGDOM

Coral Depth: 4-8 metres deep

Experience Level: Beginner to Intermediate, depending on confidence and conditions

Entry and Exit: 200 series Water Villa Jetty

Caution: Best to wear life jackets as no security or lifeguards on this area



When the sea is flat and the visibility is good, this is arguably the most exciting part of JA Manafaru's reef to explore. Because the island doesn't have the traditional crest of coral rising up and breaking the surface of the water around it, like you'll encounter at many Maldives resorts, the coral here is fairly deep, varying between about 4m and 8m deep, depending on the tide and the exact location. The overriding structures are big, old coral blocks sprouting new coral growth and hosting a plethora of fish going about their fishy business. Running from approximately the end of the 200 series water villa jetty anti-clockwise to about two thirds of the way to the sunrise jetty, this stretch is easily accessed from a ladder at the end of the water villa jetty even if your villa is not located there. One of the most impressive sections is located just past a submerged seawall, but aside from that area, this stretch is significant, with interesting coral, absolute fish soup, and generally several turtles, both hawksbill and green. Additionally, keep half an eye on the deeper water as pods of dolphins regularly round this point quite close to the reef!



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For water babies who love to explore, it's worth investigating the stretches between these more notable areas because there are areas of coral growth supporting shoals of shimmering fish, plus multiple turtles, sharks, and a variety of rays, all around the island