

Planning Guide

You will find in these pages useful information about your diving trip !

WHAT ARE THE EMBARKATION AND DISEMBARKATION TIMES ?

Embarkation will begin at 5:00pm on the first day of charter and all guests will disembark at 8:00am on the final day of the charter.

If a guest will be arriving after 5:00pm on the day of embarkation, a special pick-up time, can be arranged so that you are greeted at the airport by the dive team. Ocean Dancer does not leave Hulumale lagoon area until early the next morning. If your travel plans are delayed please contact us before your arrival for procedures.

HOW DO I GET FROM THE AIRPORT TO OCEAN DANCER ?

At 5:00pm guests should be in the airport arrivals area. Look for an agent who will have an Ocean Dancer sign. This agent will meet and greet all guests then escort them to the Dhoni for transport to the Ocean Dancer. The vessel anchors in Hulumale lagoon and is about 25 minutes from the airport

Special pick-up arrangements can be made at 75\$ extra charge (with advance notice) for guests who arrive after 5:00pm on the day of embarkation. The Ocean Dancer remains in the Hulumale lagoon until early the next morning.

HOW DO I GET FROM THE HOTEL TO OCEAN DANCER IF I ARRIVE EARLY ?

Guests that arrive a day or more early or early on the day of embarkation can make arrangements at one of the local hotels for a room or a day pass. The Hulhule hotel is located nearby on the same island as the airport and is the most inconvenient. The Nasandhura Palace (does not have a pool) is close by on the island of Male (the capital) where the main city center is and offers more affordable accommodations. The Bandos resort is about 20 minutes away by speed boat and offers a more upscale private island resort experience. Advance reservations are highly recommended.

Day passes at a hotel typically includes the use of pool (if available), towels showers, a locker, luggage storage, and a meal. Day passes are limited to a maximum of 12 hours.

To board Ocean Dancer, guests will need to return to the airport and meet the agent at the arrivals area at 5:00pm. All of the resorts use the airport and airport docks as a "central" hub for moving guests between the different islands.

WHAT DO WE DO ON THE DAY WE DISEMBARK ?

The Ocean Dancer will return to Hulhule Lagoon around 3 pm the afternoon prior to the ending cruise date. The plan for that day is to offer 2 morning dives. That night is reserved for the farewell dinner. Guests are free to snorkel, swim or arrange to go ashore upon arriving back at the lagoon.

Disembarkation will be at 8- 8:30am on your final morning. Guests will arrive at the airport around 9:00am.

Depending on your flight departure times, guests may want to obtain a hotel room or a day pass. We would recommend the Hulhule Island hotel as it is the closest to the airport. Day passes typically include use of the pool, locker, showers, luggage storage, and a meal. Depending on which resort you choose you could then take a Dhoni into the island of Male to walk around and explore, before returning in time to clean up before boarding your flight.

DO I NEED A TRIP INSURANCE ?

We strongly recommend that each guest purchase comprehensive accident, medical, baggage and trip cancellation and interruption insurance when space is reserved. Trip insurance will protect you from financial disappointment if you are prevented from making your scheduled trip due to illness or family illness, or in the event that unforeseen circumstances prevent the airline or vessel from making its scheduled trip. In an event where it is necessary to cancel or interrupt a charter due to weather or any matter beyond our control, there is no refund or credit issued. We also recommend diving accident insurance. Please inquire with our reservation office for assistance.

HOW MANY DIVES WILL WE DO EACH DAY ?

We will offer up to three dives per day (2 on the last day) and night dives one of two nights a week (weather and sea conditions permitting) from our Diving dhoni.

WHAT PAPERWORK WILL I NEED FOR DIVING ?

Please bring your certification card and log book(s) for verification of your dive training and experience. You will be required to complete and sign a standard release and waiver form prior to your arrival. Please remember that you alone are responsible for determining your medical and physical fitness to dive or to take part in any other activities during this trip. **DIVING ACTIVITIES ARE CONDUCTED AT YOUR OWN RISK.** We take no responsibility with respect to your determination. If you have any questions concerning your medical or physical fitness to dive or take part in any such activities, please consult your personal physician.

WHAT IS THE GENERAL SKILL/EXPERIENCE LEVEL OF DIVING REQUIRED FOR THIS DESTINATION ?

The Maldives is not a beginner's destination. There is drift diving with currents varying from calm, to moderate and even to strong. Divers should have the general fitness level that allows them to dive in currents and conduct surface swims (up to 50 yards) to move away from the tops of the reef to the dive Dhoni. Divers should be comfortable in the water and have near perfect buoyancy. Rapid descents are required to reach the reef when currents are present. Divers should be comfortable in open water and performing drift dives where the current may be moderate to strong. At the end of your dive you should be comfortable doing an open water safety stop and climbing the ladder on board the Dhoni with your tank on.

WHAT IS THE WATER TEMPERATURE & SHOULD I WEAR A WETSUIT ?

The water temperature remains warm and comfortable (27-30c / 80-84f deg.) throughout the year. A light wetsuit is necessary, though some people choose more thermal protection (a 3mm suit) to ensure continued core temperature warmth throughout their visit.

HOW WILL WE DIVE FROM THE OCEAN DANCER ?

Tender diving is the rule rather than the exception. The "Diving Dhoni" is a 55 foot custom built vessel that was designed to hold the entire dive operation of the Ocean Dancer. All dive equipment (SCUBA tanks, air and Nitrox compressors, dive equipment, wetsuits, etc) stay onboard the Dive Dhoni for the duration of the voyage and is attended to by our crew nightly. The trips aboard the Dhoni from Ocean Dancer to the dive sites run between 10-15 minutes. The Dhoni will be boarded from Ocean Dancer via the dive platform. During this process, the Ocean Dancer is usually moored in calm waters. Our experienced crew will be available to assist with the boarding and disembarking process to and from the Dhoni.

Generally guests will keep all of their dive gear on board, making embarkation much easier. There are five exit points on the Dhoni where a giant stride entry can be performed. At the end of your dive, guests may need to swim on the surface to move away from the shallow reef tops into deeper water where they can meet the Dhoni. To re-board the Dhoni, guests hand up their fins and weight belts up to the crew and then use the ladder (placed over the side) to re-board. Our crew will be on stand by help you off set the weight of your tank as you climb the ladder and assist you back to your seat.

Please advised that due to frequently strong currents it is MANDATORY for each diver to carry an emergency SMB (safety sausage), Dive alert (personal air horn), and mini-strobe light on all dives. If you do not bring any one of these devices with you they are available for rent on board the Ocean Dancer, however, quantities may be limited. If you do not possess these items, please notify our office prior to departure.

ARE THERE ANY LIMITATIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ON THE DIVING ?

It is a law of Republic of the Maldives that scuba divers limit depths to no deeper than 30m : 98 feet. As such, all dive operations on Ocean Dancer conform to the local regulations.

CAN I EARN AVDANCED DIVING CERTIFICATIONS OR SPECIALITIES ON BOARD ?

Several diving specialty courses are offered on Ocean Dancer, but it is necessary to give at least one month notice to us in advance of your charter date to ensure that an instructor will have the time available and that all required paperwork is complete.

Very important : if you intend to receive diving instruction on board, you must complete a medical statement on board. A doctor's note will be required if you answer yes to any of the questions on the medical statement.

ARE NITROX FILLS AVAILABLE ?

The Ocean Dancer is equipped with Nitrox facilities. Nitrox fills of up to 32% are normally available to all CERTIFIED

Nitrox divers for an additional charge. Nitrox Dive Profiles must be planned and executed with either Nitrox tables or a Nitrox compatible computer. It is recommended that the planned PO2 level be set within the limits of your certifying agency. All Nitrox fills must be analyzed by the divers using the mix and logged prior to each and every dive. Oxygen analyzers available for use by guests while onboard will be calibrated a minimum of one time per day by a crew member. PADI or TDI Nitrox certifications are usually available on board to all certified open water divers for an additional charge.

Our purpose in providing enriched air Nitrox for the use of our guests is to give those who are unfamiliar with this fairly new technology an opportunity to become certified Nitrox divers and give those already certified an enhanced safety factor in the face of extensive, repetitive dive profiles in remote regions of the world. Nitrox is not offered for extended range diving.

ARE DIVE GEAR AND PHOTO/VIDEO GEAR AVAILABLE FOR RENT ?

M/V Ocean Dancer has limited amount of diving equipment available for rent, so it is critical that you advise us in advance if you decide you want to rent gear. We offer ScubaPro BCDs with Dive Alerts and ScubaPro regulators. No photo equipment is currently available for rent.

WHAT DIVING EQUIPMENT WILL I NEED TO BRING ?

Equipment provided aboard the Ocean Dancer includes tanks (80cu.ft. aluminum with yoke style "K&R" valves), weights and weight belts. Divers will also need the following equipment :

Basic required diving equipment for each diver :

- Regulator with alternate air source
- Depth and pressure gauge
- Watch or bottom timer
- Buoyancy Compensation Device (BCD)
- Mask/Fins/Snorkel
- Wetsuit / Light skin
- Night dives : we require at least 2 light sources on a night dive

Recommended (Additional) dive equipment :

- Chemical (cyalume) light sticks
- Dive computer
- Dive light with extra batteries or charging source

WHAT SAFETY EQUIPMENT DO I NEED TO HAVE ?

Mandatory Safety equipment for each diver :

- Inflatable safety sausage
- Dive Alert (Air horn)
- Personal mini strobe

Additional recommended safety equipment :

- Whistle
- Signaling mirror

We suggest that you bring your own, although the Ocean Dancer does stock a limited supply available for rental by our guests.

I AM A PHOTOGRAPHER – WHAT CAN I EXPECT ?

Photo opportunities are abundant and not matter what system you have, you will probably experience excellent results. Be sure to pack your photo equipment carefully in a durable carrying case and bring any unique spare parts and back-up equipment with you.

Guests who are shooting digital photography may view their images on the plasma screen in the salon. Please be sure to bring the appropriate connection cables to fit your particular equipment. N° E-6 film processing is available aboard the Ocean Dancer.

Camera tables : the diving Dhoni has a camera table built into the rear for your use. There is also a camera table on the upper deck of Ocean Dancer for you to work on your equipment.

Charging stations : there is charging station in the salon for your to plug your strobes into. A few transformers are provided, however we recommend that you bring your own as well.

Rinse buckets : there is a “camera only” rinse bucket on the back of the diving Dhoni for the exclusive use of photographers on board.

Underwater privacy : all divers are required to have a buddy with them at all times. Because we are operating in a drift diving situation at times, photographers are expected to stay with their group. You may move away from the group within reason – providing that the divemaster leading the dive is kept in sight at all times. You will not be permitted to separate from the group or carry your own drift line to do your own thing.

CAN I FISH OR SPEARFISH ?

Spear Fishing is not allowed from the Ocean Dancer. Guests are prohibited from bringing spear fishing equipment on board the Ocean Dancer. Fishing is not available on Ocean Dancer.

WILL THERE BE ANY OPPORTUNITIES TO GO ASHORE DURING THE CRUISE ?

Midweek there will be an opportunity to go ashore to visit a local Island called "Dhigurah" (the longest island of Ari Atoll).

One evening the crew will organize a BBQ dinner on the beach (if weather permitted).

A trip to the Hilton to visit or for dinner can also usually be arranged. (Guests are personally responsible for any charges incurred while at the Conrad & Hilton).

WHAT IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY ON BOARD ?

The Ocean Dancer crew is trained in first aid and diving accident management. The boat is equipped with a complete first aid kit and a high capacity oxygen system. There are two very modern and well maintained Hyperbaric Chambers staffed and managed 24/7 by professionals, located on Bandos Island. This chamber is affiliated with DAN Europe & not DAN USA. We highly recommend that all guests carry valid dive insurance (DAN, Dive Assure, Dive Safe, or other diver policies offered in your area) purchased prior to the trip.

Please note : As indicated in the diving section, there is a Maldivian law that prohibits scuba divers from diving deeper than 30m/98ft. An insurance coverage problem could be created should you require the services of the a hyperbaric chamber and report (or have documented via your dive computer) violation of this law.