

Explore 

Thila Uthuruu



Haa Alif Atoll: A Timeless Jewel of Maldivian Heritage



SECRETARIAT OF THE NORTH THILADHUNMATHI ATOLL COUNCIL

HA.DHIDHDHOO, REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES



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SECRETARIAT OF THE NORTH THILADHUNMATHI ATOLL COUNCIL



Foreword

It brings me great pleasure to welcome you to this special edition of our travel magazine devoted to the exceptional beauty, rich heritage, and vibrant community of Haa Alif Atoll, the northernmost region of the Maldives. As the Council President, it is both an honor and a privilege to introduce you to our atoll, a place where the heartbeat of tradition harmonizes with the pulse of progress, and where nature and humanity coexist in remarkable balance. For too long, the Maldives has been known internationally almost exclusively for its overwater villas, private resort, and turquoise lagoons. While these are certainly among the wonders of our nation, they are just one chapter of a much richer story. Haa Alif Atoll tells a different story, one of resilience, authenticity, and connection. Here, you will discover islands where heritage lives in every corner, where untouched beaches and coral reefs thrive, and where people welcome you not as a visitor, but as a guest in their home.

Haa Alif Atoll, also known traditionally as Ihavandhippolhu, is a region steeped in the history of the Maldivian nation. It is the birthplace and stronghold of our greatest national hero, Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu al-Auzam, who led a successful resistance against the Portuguese in the 16th century. His legacy is etched into the cultural fabric of this atoll, most notably in Uttheemu, his birthplace and the site of his preserved wooden palace, Uttheemu Ganduvaru. Visiting Uttheemu is not just a step back in time; it is a journey into the soul of our identity as Maldivians. The island is a symbol of courage, independence, and deep-rooted pride. But it is only one among many historical and cultural sites across the atoll that tell the story of our people's strength, faith, and resourcefulness. Kelaa, another historically important island, offers a glimpse into the British influence during the Second World War. The island once housed a British staging post, and remnants of that era, including an old lighthouse and military facilities, are still visible. These sites, combined with the rich oral histories of our elders, offer a layered narrative of an atoll that has long stood at the crossroads of maritime trade, political change, and cultural exchange.

Our people are the true heart of Haa Alif Atoll. Life here moves at a peaceful rhythm, shaped by strong community ties, shared values, and the wisdom passed down through generations. The essence of Maldivian hospitality is found in our homes, our meals, and our conversations. Visitors to Ha. Atoll are often struck not only by the beauty of the islands but by the genuineness of the people who live on them.

Education and empowerment are priorities across the atoll. We have seen a steady rise in local entrepreneurship, especially in the areas of guesthouse tourism, fisheries, and craft production. Women-led initiatives in education, environment, and small business are also growing, supported by local councils and NGOs. The people of Ha. Atoll are proud, self-sufficient, and eager to share their way of life with the world without compromising who they are.

In recent years, Haa Alif Atoll has been quietly emerging as a destination for responsible and community-centered tourism. Unlike the crowded, commercial resort zones of the central Maldives, Ha. Atoll offers something more intimate, more immersive, and more real. Travelers can stay in locally owned guesthouses, take part in daily activities, and explore the islands with local guides who know every story, every tree, and every corner. We are deeply committed to developing tourism in a way that preserves our environment, honors our culture, and empowers our people. Through collaborative efforts with environmental organizations, national ministries, and international partners, we are working to build an infrastructure that supports responsible travel. We are improving waste management, promoting renewable energy, protecting coral reefs, and providing training for tourism professionals rooted in local knowledge and global standards.

As the Council President of Haa Alif Atoll, I am deeply aware of the responsibility that comes with showcasing our home to the world. We do so with pride, but also with care. We do not seek mass tourism. We seek meaningful connections. We believe in tourism that uplifts rather than disrupts, that learns rather than consumes, and that gives back as much as it takes. Our doors are open, our stories are waiting, and our hands are extended in welcome. Come and experience the Maldives in its most honest, most inspiring form.

With sincere gratitude,


Moosa Shafeeg

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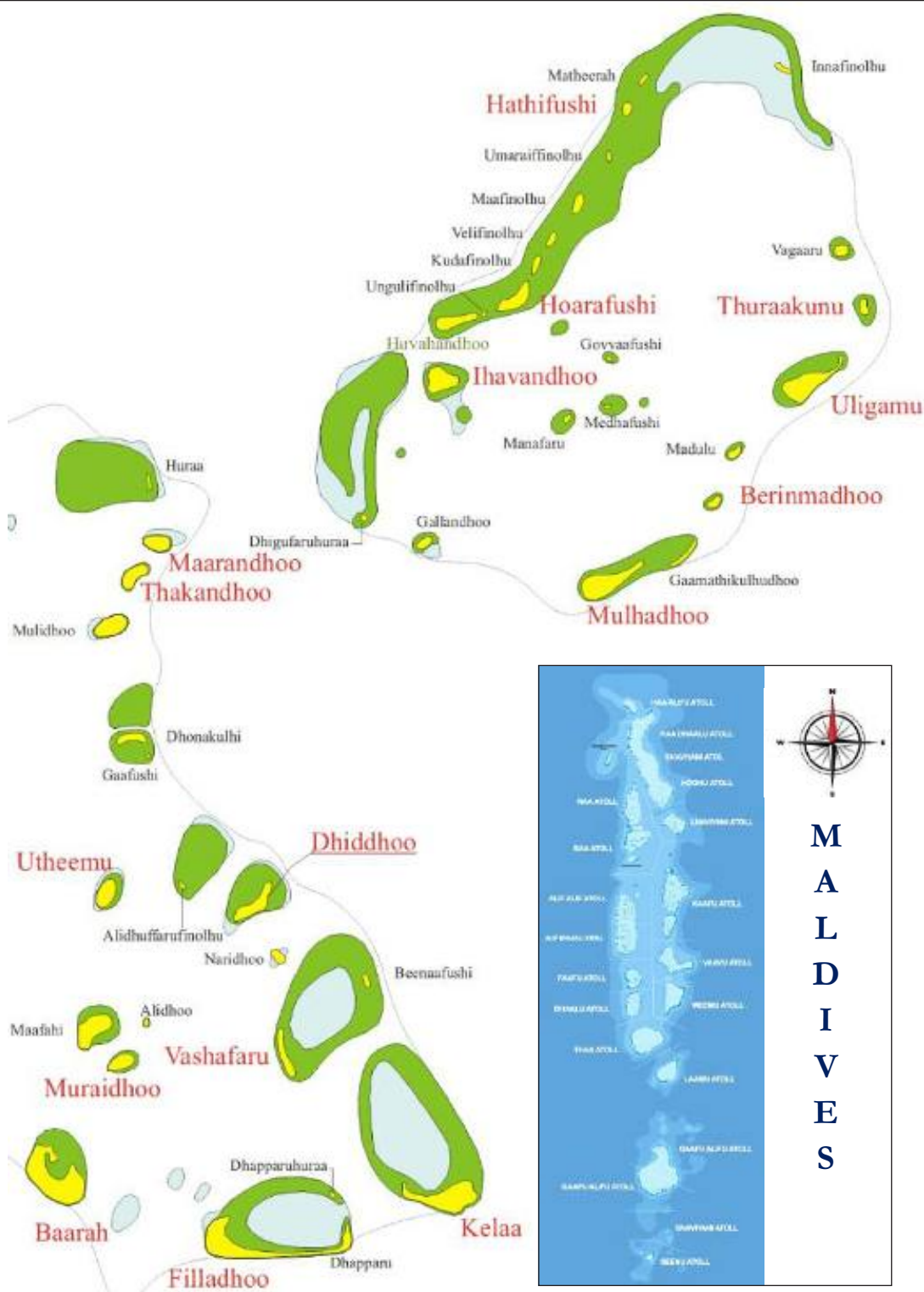
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Ha. Atoll Council



Haa Alif Atoll: A Timeless Jewel of Maldivian Heritage

No discussion of Haa Alif Atoll can begin without mentioning Utheemu, an island etched deeply into the national consciousness of the Maldives. Utheemu is the birthplace of Mohamed Thakurufaanu Al-Auzam, the revered national hero who led a successful resistance against Portuguese colonial rule in the 16th century. His campaign to restore Islamic rule in the Maldives, known as the Thakurufaanu Jihad, began from this very atoll. The Utheemu Palace (Utheemu Ganduvaru), where Thakurufaanu was born and raised, still stands today as a preserved historical site. This wooden palace, built in traditional Maldivian architecture, provides a rare glimpse into the lifestyle and living conditions of nobility during pre-colonial times. Visitors can walk through its narrow hallways and quiet courtyards, imagining the early years of the hero who would go on to shape the nation's destiny. Thus, Haa Alif Atoll is not just a geographic region, it is the birthplace of freedom and resistance, making it an invaluable site of Maldivian heritage.

An Archive of Islamic and Cultural Heritage

Haa Alif Atoll is also a repository of Islamic history and cultural identity. After the Maldives converted to Islam in 1153 AD, the northern atolls played a vital role in preserving and spreading Islamic values and teachings throughout the archipelago. The atoll is home to numerous ancient mosques, coral stone tombs, and religious schools, many of which are centuries old. The Friday Mosque in Baarah and the old mosque in Utheemu reflect classic Maldivian craftsmanship with intricate coral carvings, woodwork, and calligraphy. These places are more than spiritual centers, they are living museums that narrate the story of Islamic devotion, local artistry, and educational traditions. Additionally, local customs such as boduberu drumming, traditional fishing methods, and hand-crafts continue to thrive in the islands of Haa Alif, contributing to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

Strategic and Historical Importance

Due to its location at the northern gateway to the Maldives, Haa Alif Atoll has always held strategic importance. Historically, it served as a buffer zone against invaders and traders sailing from the Arabian Peninsula, the Indian subcontinent, and East Africa.

During colonial times, the British and other foreign powers recognized the significance of the northern atolls. While southern atolls were more economically developed, the northern ones, especially Ha. Atoll, remained culturally resilient and fiercely autonomous. The legacy of self-reliance seen in the resistance of Mohamed Thakurufaanu is echoed in the identity of the region even today.

Preserved Natural and Archaeological Beauty

Haa Alif Atoll is not only rich in history but also in untouched natural beauty, making it a perfect blend of cultural and ecological heritage. The atoll consists of over 40 islands, many of which are uninhabited and covered in lush tropical vegetation. The underwater sites around Ha. Atoll are believed to contain ancient shipwrecks and coral structures dating back centuries.

These are of potential archaeological and marine historical significance, offering insight into the Maldives' connections to ancient trade routes. Furthermore, the relative isolation of the atoll has allowed many traditional lifestyles and crafts to survive modernization. The communities still practice traditional boatbuilding (dhoni craftsmanship), palm thatching, and lacquer work—all of which are essential elements of Maldivian cultural heritage.

Symbol of National Unity and Pride

Finally, Haa Alif Atoll stands as a symbol of national unity, reminding all Maldivians of the price of freedom and the importance of preserving identity. The story of Mohamed Thakurufaanu is taught in every school, and his legacy is celebrated across the country. But it is in Haa Alif that this legacy is most tangibly preserved, with historical buildings, relics, and oral histories passed down from generation to generations.

Conclusion

In a nation defined by its atolls, Haa Alif holds a unique and irreplaceable place in the heritage of the Maldives. As the cradle of resistance, the preserver of Islamic identity, and a sanctuary of cultural tradition, this northern atoll is a testament to the resilience and pride of the Maldivian people. Its villages, mosques, and natural landscapes together tell a story that must be remembered and protected. Designating Ha. Atoll as a special heritage site is not merely an act of preservation—it is a commitment to honoring the soul of a nation. In doing so, the Maldives not only safeguards its past but also builds a stronger, more connected identity for future generations.



Thuraakunu



THE NORTHERN MOST ISLAND OF THE MALDIVES

Experience the highest elevated terrain among all the islands in the Maldives, offering breathtaking panoramic views. Discover the captivating black sand bank on the south side, appearing and disappearing with the changing seasons. Explore the northern side with its stunning white sand beaches, adding to the island's allure.

Experience the warm and welcoming atmosphere of Thuraakunu's community, consisting of 706 residents. Discover the active involvement of the youth in the tourism sector, and the island's strong connection to agriculture, where many residents cultivate crops in their own backyards. Learn about the important role women play in government sectors on the island.

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The Light House in Thuraakunu is considered as one of the Historical Land Marks in the island. As referred by the locals, it represents the Northern Most Point on the Maldives. It is also considered as the top attraction of the island for tourists and as well as for locals of other islands, where it is a unique experience to never miss while visiting Thuraakunu.



Nothern Most Point / HA, Thuraakunu

Thuraakunu Old Mosque is a historic place of worship located on Thuraakunu Island in the northernmost atoll of the Maldives, Haa Alif Atoll. Believed to have been constructed several centuries ago, the mosque stands as a testament to early Islamic architecture in the region. It features traditional Maldivian craftsmanship, including coral stone construction, intricate wood carvings, and calligraphic inscriptions. The mosque not only serves as a spiritual center for the local community but also represents the enduring legacy of Islamic faith and cultural heritage in the northern Maldives.



Old Mosque / HA, Thuraakunu

An ancient sundial is a timekeeping device that uses the position of the Sun to indicate the time of day. It's one of the earliest instruments for measuring time, dating back thousands of years used by civilizations such as the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Babylonians, and Chinese.



Ancient Sundial / HA, Thuraakunu

The Black Sand Beaches of Haa Alif Thuraakunu present a rare and captivating natural feature in the Maldives. Located on the island's northern coast, these distinctive shores stand out for their striking dark-colored sands, formed by unique geological processes. Unlike the typical white coral beaches found throughout the country, Thuraakunu's black sands offer a stark and beautiful contrast, drawing interest from geologists, photographers, and nature enthusiasts alike. These beaches not only enhance the island's natural charm but also contribute to its ecological diversity, making them a valuable component of Thuraakunu's environmental and cultural landscape. Their preservation remains a local priority.



The Black Sand Beach / HA, Thuraakunu



Uligan



THE YACHT'S SAILSHORE

Uligan, situated 177 nautical miles north of the Maldivian capital Male, is a captivating village nestled in the northwest region of the Indian Ocean. Known as a favored stopover for foreign vessels crossing the Arabian Sea, Uligan boasts a world-famous natural yacht harbor, attracting maritime enthusiasts from around the globe. With its lush trees and thriving marine life, this idyllic island offers a picturesque escape. Notably, Uligan is home to a rare ancient tree that is exclusive to the Maldives, adding to its natural allure.

Uligan is an exquisite island located at the very northern of the Maldives. The waters surrounding the island are full of marine life and the sunsets are worth watching. The people of Uligan are both courteous and

The HA. Uligan Grand BBQ is a unique and much-anticipated annual culinary celebration held on the island of Uligan in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. Known for its scale and community spirit, the event brings together residents and visitors to enjoy a wide array of grilled seafood and traditional Maldivian dishes.

Held during festive seasons, particularly after Ramadan, the BBQ is prepared collectively by the islanders, reflecting strong communal values and hospitality. More than just a meal, the Uligan Grand BBQ is a vibrant expression of island unity, culture, and the timeless joy of sharing food together.



The HA. Uligan Old Mosque, locally known as Uligan Miskiyy, is a distinctive and culturally significant structure situated on the island of Uligan in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. Unlike the modern mosques found on many other islands, the Uligan Old Mosque is renowned for its traditional architecture and historical value.



The HA. Uligan Old Mosque is a distinctive and culturally significant structure situated on the island of Uligan in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. Unlike the modern mosques found on many other islands, the Uligan Old Mosque is renowned for its traditional architecture and historical value.

The mosque's design is characterized by its simplicity and functionality, serving as a place of worship and community gathering for the residents of Uligan. The Uligan Old Mosque stands as a testament to the island's rich cultural heritage and architectural traditions. Its preservation offers insight into the historical development of religious structures in the Maldives and continues to be a focal point for the island's spiritual life.



HA. Uligan Yacht Harbour, located on the northernmost island of Uligan in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives, is a unique maritime hub for international yachts. Positioned along a key route from Southeast Asia to Europe, it provides essential services such as customs and immigration clearance, fueling, fresh water, and provisions for long-distance sailors. The harbour offers a sheltered anchorage and is known for the warm hospitality of the local community, making it a welcoming stop for yachts.



Uligan Yacht Harbour is an ideal destination for travelers seeking both maritime adventure and cultural immersion. It offers a serene environment with pristine beaches, clear waters, and abundant marine life, perfect for relaxation and exploration. Visitors can experience the authentic Maldivian lifestyle, away from more crowded tourist spots.

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Matheerah: A Historical and Cultural Exploration of the Sacred Island

Introduction

Matheerah, often referred to as Matheerahfulhu, is an uninhabited island located in the northernmost reaches of the Maldives, within Haa Alifu Atoll. Despite its small size and current state of abandonment, Matheerah holds significant historical, cultural, and spiritual value. This page describes the island's origins and its transformation into a revered shrine, the practices associated with it, and the challenges it faces in the modern era.



Historical Origins and the Emergence of the Shrine

The origins of Matheerah's sacred status are rooted in a maritime legend. Fishermen from Hathifushi discovered a wooden box adrift at sea, which, upon inspection, was found to be a coffin bearing the inscription "Ali, the respected man of Mecca." This discovery led to the establishment of a mausoleum around the coffin, transforming the island into a pilgrimage site.

Rituals and Practices at Matheerah

The shrine at Matheerah was not merely a tomb but a center for communal rituals and offerings. Devotees would travel to the island to fulfill vows, a practice known as "Ziyarat." One of the most notable rituals involved weighing offerings against the weight of individuals, symbolizing the fulfillment of promises made to the spirit believed to reside there.



Architectural Features and Sacred Structures

The mausoleum at Matheerah is distinguished by its unique architectural elements. The structure includes an intricately designed doorway, reminiscent of the 18th-century Kandhuvalu mosque found in Utheemu. Despite the ravages of time, traces of its original lacquer work and craftsmanship remain visible.

Decline and Preservation Challenges

The decline of Matheerah's status as a spiritual center can be attributed to several factors. In the 1980s, religious reforms led to the cessation of certain practices associated with the shrine, as they were deemed innovations not rooted in orthodox Islamic teachings. Additionally, the island's remote location and the erosion of traditional beliefs have contributed to its abandonment.

Efforts to preserve Matheerah have been limited. While the island's historical and cultural value is acknowledged, it has not been prioritized for conservation. The lack of infrastructure and resources has hindered restoration and maintenance projects, leaving the site vulnerable to environmental degradation.



Cultural Significance and Legacy

Matheerah's legacy extends beyond its physical structures. The island embodies the spiritual and communal traditions of the Maldivian people. The rituals performed at the shrine reflected a deep-seated belief in the interconnection between the material and spiritual worlds. The communal sharing of offerings reinforced social bonds and collective identity.

In contemporary times, Matheerah serves as a poignant reminder of the Maldives' rich cultural heritage. While the island may no longer function as a center of pilgrimage, its historical narratives continue to inspire reflection on the evolution of religious practices and community life in the region.

Conclusion

Matheerah stands as a testament to the Maldives' complex tapestry of history, culture, and spirituality. From its origins as a sacred site to its current state of neglect, the island's journey mirrors broader themes of change and continuity in Maldivian society. Preserving Matheerah is not merely an act of conservation but a commitment to honoring the traditions and values that have shaped the nation's identity.



Molhadhoo



Molhadhoo Eco Park is a tranquil, community-driven green space located on the island of Molhadhoo in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. The primary goal of Molhadhoo Eco Park is to raise environmental awareness and encourage visitors to experience and appreciate the island's natural beauty. By offering a serene environment, the park also serves to strengthen local tourism and provide a space for both residents and visitors to connect with nature.



Eco Park / HA, Molhadhoo

Molhadhoo Eco Park offers a peaceful retreat for nature lovers and those seeking a quiet escape. Visitors can enjoy leisurely walks, birdwatching, or simply relax in the shade of the park's greenery. The park's commitment to sustainability and community involvement makes it a unique and enriching destination for travelers seeking an authentic Maldivian experience.



Eco Park / HA, Molhadhoo

Molhadhoo is also known for its remarkable monuments, which add to its historical significance. The island boasts four water wells, one of which was used by ancient residents as a drinking water source, and a shrine. These monuments are over 100 years old and reflect the rich archaeological heritage of the island. The Sayyid Thoha Shrine, located in the cemetery of the former Friday Mosque, is particularly notable, as it was a place where people used to take vows thirty years ago.



Water Well / HA, Molhadhoo

Molhadhoo, in the Maldives, boasts a rich heritage, including its natural beauty, cultural traditions, and historical significance. Specifically, it's known for its connection to green sea turtles, with the island and nearby Gaamathikulhudhoo once famous for their nesting populations. Additionally, Molhadhoo's history is intertwined with that of the Ihavandhippolhu Atoll, where it's located.



Turtle Nest / HA, Molhadhoo

THE TURTLE ISLAND



HA. Molhadhoo is a captivating island in the northernmost reaches of the Maldives, nestled in Haa Alif Atoll. With its lush greenery, pristine white sandy beaches, and a rich cultural heritage, it offers an authentic Maldivian experience away from the typical resort crowds.

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Hoarafushi



THE HOARA ISLAND

Hoarafushi is an inhabited island located in the northernmost administrative division of the Maldives, Haa Alif Atoll.

The island's name, "Hoarafushi," is derived from the Dhivehi word "hoara," meaning the great frigatebird, which was once commonly seen in the area.

Hoarafushi's blend of rich history, cultural heritage, and natural beauty makes it a unique destination in the Maldives, offering visitors a glimpse into the traditional Maldivian way of life amidst stunning tropical surroundings.

The surrounding Haa Alif Atoll is renowned for its natural beauty and biodiversity. The region features newly formed coral islets, thriving marine life, and the protected Gallandhoo (Bird Island), which serves as a sanctuary for various seabird species. Additionally, the Bilehdhoo Thila, known as the "fish aquarium," is a popular diving spot celebrated for its vibrant coral reefs and abundant marine life.

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Tucked away in the northern reaches of the Maldives, Hoarafushi Hoara Beach is where untouched beauty meets serene island life. With powdery white sands, crystal-clear turquoise waters, and swaying coconut palms, this tranquil beach offers an authentic slice of paradise far from the crowds. Whether you're looking to unwind under the Maldivian sun, explore vibrant marine life through snorkeling, or simply enjoy a peaceful stroll along the shore, Hoara Beach promises an unforgettable escape. Come and discover the charm of Hoarafushi – where every sunset paints the sky with magic.



Nestled in the peaceful island of Hoarafushi lies the Hoarafushi Ziyaarai – a revered and tranquil shrine that reflects the island's deep-rooted Islamic heritage and spiritual legacy. This sacred site holds historical significance for the local community and offers visitors a quiet space for reflection and respect.



Surrounded by gentle sea breezes and lush island greenery, the Ziyaarai is not only a place of prayer but also a symbol of the cultural and religious traditions that have shaped Hoarafushi for generations.

Step into the vibrant heart of island life with Hoarafushi Rahvehi Fannu – a lively celebration of culture, community, and tradition in one of the Maldives' most spirited islands. This beloved local festival brings together the colors, rhythms, and flavors of Hoarafushi, showcasing everything from traditional games and music to local crafts and delicious island cuisine.



Whether you're a visitor or a local, Rahvehi Fannu is a time to reconnect, rejoice, and relive the essence of Maldivian heritage. With joyful parades, cultural performances, and warm island hospitality, it's an experience that captures the soul of Hoarafushi and leaves lasting memories.



Annama Lodge offers an inviting escape for travelers seeking comfort, culture, and a touch of local charm. This cozy boutique guesthouse blends warm Maldivian hospitality with modern simplicity, making it the perfect home away from home.

This Dive Center offers an exceptional gateway to the underwater wonders of the Maldives. Located in the pristine Haa Alifu Atoll, it provides professional diving services, certified courses, and guided excursions. With expert instructors and vibrant marine biodiversity, every dive promises a safe, thrilling, and unforgettable ocean adventure.



Ihavandhoo



THE FISHERMEN'S PARADISE

Ihavandhoo is a charming island nestled in the northernmost reaches of the Maldives, in the Haa Alif Atoll (also known as Ihavandhippolhu Atoll). Known for its rich cultural heritage, tranquil atmosphere, and warm hospitality, Ihavandhoo offers a unique glimpse into traditional Maldivian island life.

Surrounded by turquoise lagoons and coral reefs teeming with marine life, it's a serene destination perfect for travelers seeking a peaceful retreat away from the typical tourist trail. With its blend of history, natural beauty, and a strong sense of community, Ihavandhoo invites you to discover the Maldives beyond the resorts.

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Ihavandhoo Cuisine offers a delicious taste of authentic Maldivian flavors, deeply rooted in the island's fishing culture and traditional cooking methods.

Ihavandhoo's cuisine reflects its deep-rooted island traditions, making it not just a meal, but a cultural experience filled with warmth, spice, and the bounty of the sea. Fish chips is one of the famous dish made in Ihavandhoo.



Fish Chips / HA, Ihavandhoo

Smoked fish production in Ihavandhoo is an integral part of the island's traditional fishing industry, reflecting the community's deep connection with the sea. The process is not only a way to preserve fish but also a vital cultural practice, passed down through generations.



Smoked Fish / HA, Ihavandhoo

The Old Friday Mosque of Ihavandhoo, located in Haa Alif Atoll, is a remarkable example of traditional Maldivian architecture, constructed on December 16, 1701 CE (15 Rajab 1113 AH) during the reign of Sultan Ibrahim Muzhiruddin. This mosque is renowned for its intricate coral stone craftsmanship and serves as a testament to the island's rich cultural heritage. It continues to serve as a place of worship, with many elders preferring to perform their prayers here, reflecting the deep spiritual connection the community has with this historic site.



Old Friday Mosque / HA, Ihavandhoo

In recognition of its unique architectural style and cultural importance, the mosque is part of the Coral Stone Mosques of the Maldives, which have been submitted to the UNESCO Tentative World Heritage List. These mosques are celebrated for their fusion of Indian Ocean seaborne cultures, resulting in a distinctive form of architecture and artistry.



Old Friday Mosque / HA, Ihavandhoo

Visiting the Old Friday Mosque of Ihavandhoo offers a glimpse into the Maldives' rich history and architectural heritage, making it a significant cultural landmark in the region.



Kelaa



THE KELAVAKI ISLAND

Kelaa, a picturesque island nestled in the Haa Alif Atoll of northern Maldives, is a hidden gem brimming with history, natural beauty, and serene island charm. Surrounded by turquoise waters and swaying coconut palms, Kelaa is where time slows down and traditions come to life. With friendly locals, peaceful beaches, and a rich cultural heartbeat, Kelaa warmly welcomes you to experience the Maldives in its most authentic and tranquil form.

To experience the authentic Maldives untouched beaches, rich history, and warm island hospitality. Walk the paths of a national hero, explore coral-fringed shores, and unwind in serene, crowd-free beauty. Kelaa is your peaceful escape with a story to tell.

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Kelaa, an island located in the northern region of the Maldives, is renowned for its ecologically significant wetland areas and the presence of the endangered Kelavaki mangrove species. These wetlands notably including the designated “Kelavaki Park” provides a unique opportunity for the observation, study, and conservation of the island’s diverse ecosystems. In addition to its environmental importance, Kelaa is home to pristine beaches and holds considerable historical value, with remnants from the Second World War further enhancing its cultural heritage.



Kelavaki Bageecha / HA, Kelaa

Kelaa Badi Ge is a significant historical structure located on Ha. Kelaa Island in the Maldives. Built by the British Royal Air Force in 1945, this former armory served as part of a strategic military base during World War II. Constructed from coral stone, Badi Ge stands as a rare and enduring symbol of Kelaa’s wartime legacy, reflecting the island’s unexpected yet vital role in global history. Today, it remains an important heritage site, offering insight into both military architecture and the island’s historical significance.



Kelaa Badi Ge / HA, Kelaa



Farm / HA, Kelaa

Kelaa Farm, located on the fertile island of Ha. Kelaa in the northern Maldives, is a thriving example of sustainable agriculture and community-led development. Known for its rich soil and traditional farming practices, the farm produces a variety of fruits, vegetables, and herbs that support local food security and promote eco-friendly cultivation. As both a source of livelihood and a symbol of resilience, Kelaa Farm reflects the island’s deep-rooted connection to the land and its commitment to a greener future.



Aasaaree Miskiyy / HA, Kelaa

Kelaa Aasaaree Miskiyy, located on the island of Kelaa in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives, is a historically significant mosque that reflects the architectural and cultural heritage of the northern Maldives. Believed to have been constructed during the Islamic golden era of the region, the mosque is built using traditional coral stone masonry and features intricate woodwork and craftsmanship emblematic of early Maldivian Islamic architecture. The Aasaaree Miskiyy serves not only as a place of worship but also as a cultural landmark, symbolizing the island’s enduring religious devotion and its connection to the broader historical narrative of the Maldives.



Vashafaru



THE PRISTINE BEACH ISLAND

Vashafaru is a picturesque island located in the northern Haa Alif Atoll of the Maldives, known for its scenic beauty, rich cultural heritage, and close-knit community. Surrounded by turquoise waters and fringed with white sandy beaches, the island is also home to fertile lands and traditional craftsmanship.

Vashafaru holds historical significance as one of the few islands with ancient coral stone structures and is celebrated for preserving time-honored customs, making it a unique blend of natural charm and cultural legacy.

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Vashafaru is renowned for its traditional craftwork, reflecting the island's rich cultural heritage and artisanal skill. Local craftspeople continue to preserve time-honored techniques, creating intricate works such as woven mats (kunaa), coir rope, and handcrafted ornaments using natural materials like palm leaves and coconut shells. These crafts not only serve practical purposes but also represent the creativity, sustainability, and cultural pride of the Vashafaru community. Visitors have the opportunity to witness and appreciate this living tradition, deeply rooted in Maldivian island life.



Vashafaru's pristine beaches and tranquil lagoon embody the natural beauty of the Maldives at its finest. Fringed with soft white sands and lapped by crystal-clear turquoise waters, the island's coastline offers a serene escape for visitors seeking relaxation and renewal. The calm, shallow lagoon is ideal for swimming, snorkeling, and observing marine life, including vibrant coral reefs and native sea creatures. This unspoiled seascape not only enhances the island's charm but also reflects its commitment to preserving the delicate balance between nature and community.

Vashafaru offers an exceptional diving experience, where vibrant coral reefs and abundant marine life come together to create an underwater paradise. The island's surrounding waters are home to diverse marine species, including colorful fish, rays, and turtles, making it a premier destination for divers of all levels. With crystal-clear visibility and well-preserved ecosystems, Vashafaru provides an unforgettable dive into the heart of the Maldives' marine biodiversity. Whether you're a seasoned diver or a beginner, Vashafaru's dive sites promise an immersive and awe-inspiring adventure beneath the waves.





Dhidhdhoo



THE CAPITAL ISLAND

HA. Dhidhdhoo, the northernmost capital island of the Maldives' Haa Alif Atoll, stands as a vibrant hub of governance, commerce, and community in the northern region. Surrounded by pristine turquoise waters and enriched with cultural heritage, the island blends natural beauty with growing urban development.

Dhidhdhoo is the administrative capital of Haa Alif Atoll, the northernmost atoll of the Maldives. Serving as the central hub for governance, public services, and regional development, Dhidhdhoo plays a key role in connecting the northern islands. Known for its strategic location and strong community, the island is an important center of administration including an atoll hospital and banking service, education, and commerce in the atoll.

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Located in the picturesque northern island of HA. Dhidhdhoo, the Dhidhdhoo Salt Factory is a pioneering initiative in the Maldives' salt production industry. Drawing from the island's pristine marine resources, the factory specializes in producing high-quality, iodine-enriched sea salt that meets both local health needs and international standards. With a commitment to sustainability, innovation, and community empowerment, the factory stands as a proud symbol of Dhidhdhoo's growing role in regional development and self-reliance.



Smoked fish processing in HA. Dhidhdhoo is a traditional practice that reflects the island's deep-rooted connection to the sea and its commitment to sustainable fisheries. Utilizing time-honored methods passed down through generations, local processors clean, salt, and smoke freshly caught fish—most commonly tuna—using natural wood and careful techniques to preserve flavor and quality. This process not only enhances the shelf life of the fish but also adds a distinct taste appreciated both locally and nationally. As a key part of Dhidhdhoo's local economy, smoked fish production supports livelihoods and contributes to the island's identity as a hub of artisanal seafood craftsmanship in the northern Maldives.



Gracefully situated in the heart of HA. Dhidhdhoo, the Eid Mosque stands as a symbol of spiritual devotion and cultural pride. As one of the most prominent places of worship in the northern Maldives, it plays a central role in uniting the community during Friday prayers, Eid celebrations, and religious events. With its elegant architecture and tranquil setting, the mosque not only reflects the island's strong Islamic heritage but also serves as a beacon of unity, peace, and tradition for generations to come.



Visiting the HA. Dhidhdhoo Eid Mosque offers a unique opportunity to experience the spiritual and cultural heart of the island. As a central landmark in the northern Maldives, the mosque showcases traditional Maldivian Islamic architecture and provides a serene space for reflection and worship. Beyond its religious significance, the mosque plays a vital role in bringing the local community together, especially during major Islamic celebrations like Eid. Whether you're a visitor seeking cultural insight or a traveler appreciating architectural beauty, the Dhidhdhoo Eid Mosque offers a peaceful and meaningful connection to the island's heritage and way of life.



Filladhoo



THE DIVER'S PARADISE

Located in the picturesque Haa Alif Atoll, HA. Filladhoo is a serene island that captures the essence of the Maldives' natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. Known for its pristine beaches, lush vegetation, and welcoming community, Filladhoo offers a peaceful retreat from the bustle of everyday life. With its unspoiled environment and strong cultural traditions, the island serves as a captivating destination for those seeking both relaxation and a deeper connection to Maldivian island life.

HA. Filladhoo is a hidden gem in the northern Maldives, offering visitors a serene escape surrounded by stunning natural beauty. With its unspoiled beaches, crystal-clear waters, and lush landscapes, the island provides a perfect setting for relaxation and exploration. The warm, welcoming community adds to the island's charm, offering a unique opportunity to experience authentic Maldivian culture and traditions. Whether you seek peaceful surroundings, picturesque views, or a deeper connection with the Maldives' rich heritage, HA. Filladhoo promises an unforgettable and enriching experience.

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In HA. Filladhoo, the traditional craft of coir rope preparation plays a vital role in the island's cultural heritage. Using the fibrous husk of coconuts, local artisans skillfully create strong, durable ropes that have long been essential for various aspects of island life, from fishing to construction. The process, passed down through generations, showcases the island's resourcefulness and connection to its natural surroundings. Coir rope-making not only supports the local economy but also preserves a significant cultural practice, offering visitors a glimpse into the island's sustainable traditions and craftsmanship.



Coconut palm weaving in HA. Filladhoo is a timeless tradition that showcases the island's deep connection to its natural resources. Local artisans skillfully weave the fronds of coconut palms into a variety of functional and decorative items, from baskets and mats to traditional roofing materials. This craft not only highlights the ingenuity and sustainability of island life but also preserves a significant cultural practice passed down through generations. Coconut palm weaving remains an essential part of daily life in Filladhoo, reflecting the community's respect for nature and their commitment to maintaining their heritage.



The underwater wreck near HA. Filladhoo is an intriguing site for divers and history enthusiasts alike. Resting beneath the clear, turquoise waters, the wreck offers a glimpse into the region's maritime history, with remnants of the ship serving as a captivating underwater attraction. Over time, the wreck has become a vibrant ecosystem, with coral reefs and marine life thriving around it. This unique site provides an unforgettable diving experience, combining historical mystery with the natural beauty of the Maldives' underwater world.



Visiting the underwater wreck near HA. Filladhoo offers a unique and memorable experience for diving enthusiasts and curious explorers. This sunken vessel, now beautifully encrusted with corals and teeming with vibrant marine life, has transformed into a thriving underwater habitat. It provides not only an exciting dive site but also a chance to witness the fascinating intersection of history and nature beneath the waves. With its clear waters and rich bio-diversity, the wreck is a must-visit destination for those seeking adventure, photography opportunities, and a deeper appreciation of the Maldives' hidden underwater treasures.





Maarandhoo



THE CASSAVA ISLAND

HA. Maarandhoo is a peaceful and picturesque island located in the Haa Alif Atoll of the northern Maldives. Surrounded by crystal-clear waters and lush coastal vegetation, the island offers a tranquil setting ideal for nature lovers and those seeking a serene escape. Though small in size, Maarandhoo holds cultural and ecological significance, reflecting the timeless charm of Maldivian island life in its purest form.

Visiting HA. Maarandhoo offers a rare opportunity to experience the untouched beauty and quiet charm of a secluded Maldivian island. Surrounded by crystal-clear lagoons and rich marine life, the island is an ideal retreat for nature enthusiasts, snorkelers, and those seeking solitude away from the bustle of urban life. Its unspoiled landscapes and tranquil environment make it perfect for peaceful reflection, eco-exploration, or simply enjoying the serenity of the ocean. HA. Maarandhoo invites visitors to reconnect with nature and discover the authentic rhythm of island life in the northern Maldives.

The HA. Maarandhoo Ziyaaraaiy is a revered site of spiritual and historical importance, deeply rooted in the island's Islamic heritage. Believed to be the resting place of a respected religious figure, the shrine stands as a quiet symbol of faith, tradition, and local devotion. Surrounded by the island's natural tranquility, the Ziyaaraaiy offers a peaceful space for reflection and prayer, while also serving as a cultural landmark that connects present generations to the spiritual legacy of the past.



The Naibuge of HA. Maarandhoo, historically known as the residence of the island's deputy chief (Naib), stands as a significant cultural and administrative landmark. This traditional structure reflects the island's rich governance heritage and serves as a symbol of local leadership and community organization in earlier times. With its modest yet meaningful architecture, the Naibuge offers a glimpse into the island's past, where leadership, respect, and service to the community were deeply rooted in daily life and tradition.



The cassava farm in HA. Maarandhoo represents the island's commitment to sustainable agriculture and food security. As one of the key traditional crops cultivated in the Maldives, cassava thrives in the island's fertile soil and plays an important role in supporting the local diet and economy. Managed with care and local knowledge passed down through generations, the farm not only sustains the community but also reflects the island's resilience and dedication to preserving its agricultural heritage in harmony with nature.



A visit to the HA. Maarandhoo cassava farm offers a unique opportunity to experience the island's agricultural heritage and sustainable living practices. Set amidst the island's natural greenery, the farm showcases how traditional knowledge and modern techniques come together to cultivate one of the Maldives' most resilient and essential crops. Visitors can gain insight into local farming methods, understand the role of cassava in food security, and appreciate the community's dedication to self-sufficiency. It is an enriching experience for those interested in agritourism, culture, and the quiet beauty of rural island life.

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Thakandhoo



THE TRADITIONAL ISLAND

Located in the northern reaches of Haa Alif Atoll, HA. Thakandhoo is an island of great historical and cultural significance in the Maldives. Best known as the final resting place of national hero Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu, the island holds a special place in the nation's history as a symbol of courage and independence. Surrounded by calm turquoise waters and enriched with traditional island life, Thakandhoo offers both a peaceful retreat and a meaningful connection to the Maldivian spirit of resilience and heritage.

A visit to HA. Thakandhoo offers an exceptional opportunity to explore the rich history and cultural heritage of the Maldives. The island is home to the tomb of Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu, a revered national hero who played a pivotal role in liberating the Maldives from Portuguese rule in the 16th century. Visitors can immerse themselves in the island's tranquil atmosphere, learn about its historical significance, and witness traditional island life. With its deep connection to the nation's past and its serene, picturesque surroundings, Thakandhoo is a must-visit destination for those seeking both cultural enrichment and natural beauty.

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Thakandhoo Cemetery is a historically significant burial site located on Thakandhoo Island in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. It is best known as the final resting place of Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu's younger brother, Ali Thakurufaanu, a key figure in the Maldivian resistance against Portuguese occupation in the 16th century. The cemetery stands as a solemn reminder of the island's rich historical and cultural heritage, offering insight into the nation's enduring spirit and legacy.



Visiting Thakandhoo Cemetery offers a unique opportunity to connect with the rich history and heritage of the Maldives. As the burial site of Ali Thakurufaanu, a national hero and brother of Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu, the cemetery holds deep historical significance in the country's struggle for independence during the 16th century. The site provides a quiet, reflective space where visitors can pay their respects and gain insight into the sacrifices made by those who shaped the nation's identity. For history enthusiasts and cultural travelers alike, Thakandhoo Cemetery is a meaningful stop that honors the legacy of Maldivian resilience and patriotism.



Ali Thakurufaanu Ziyaarai, located on Thakandhoo Island in Haa Alif Atoll, is a revered historical and cultural site in the Maldives. It marks the final resting place of Ali Thakurufaanu, the younger brother of Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu, who played a pivotal role in the Maldivian resistance against Portuguese rule in the 16th century. The Ziyaarai stands as a symbol of bravery, sacrifice, and patriotism, reflecting the deep respect Maldivians hold for those who fought for the nation's freedom. Visiting this sacred site offers not only a moment of reflection but also a chance to appreciate the enduring legacy of the Thakurufaanu brothers in the shaping of Maldivian history.



The Thakandhoo mangroves, nestled within the serene expanse of the Maldives, represent a rare and ecologically significant natural treasure. These coastal wetlands are not only a sanctuary for diverse species of flora and fauna, but also play a vital role in protecting the island from erosion, sustaining fisheries, and maintaining the delicate balance of marine and terrestrial ecosystems. With their intricate root systems and vibrant biodiversity, the Thakandhoo mangroves stand as a testament to the island's rich natural heritage. Preserving these mangroves is essential—not only for the environmental health of the region but also for future generations who deserve to experience the quiet beauty and ecological wonder of this unique habitat.





Utheemu



THE NATIONAL HERO ISLAND

Utheemu, located in the northernmost reaches of the Maldives' Haa Alif Atoll, stands as a beacon of the nation's rich cultural and historical tapestry. This serene island is renowned as the birthplace of Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu, a national hero. At the heart of Utheemu lies the Utheemu Ganduvaru, a well-preserved wooden palace that offers a rare glimpse into the royal lifestyle of that era. The island's enduring legacy is further enriched by its ancient mosque, archaeological sites, and the warmth of its close-knit community, making it a compelling destination for those seeking to delve into the Maldives' storied past.

Ha. Utheemu is a captivating destination for those seeking a deeper understanding of Maldivian heritage and history. Beyond its historical significance, Utheemu enchants travelers with its peaceful island charm, warm hospitality, and glimpses into the authentic Maldivian way of life. A visit to Ha. Utheemu is not only a journey through history but also an enriching cultural experience that highlights the proud legacy of the Maldives.

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Ha. Utheemu Kandhuvalu Miskiyy is a beautifully preserved ancient mosque that reflects the deep spiritual and cultural heritage of the Maldives. Nestled within the historic island of Utheemu, this mosque is renowned for its traditional coral-stone architecture, finely crafted wooden interiors, and serene atmosphere. As one of the oldest mosques in the region, Kandhuvalu Miskiyy stands as a symbol of the island's enduring Islamic faith and community values. Its historical and religious significance, coupled with its architectural elegance, makes it a meaningful site for both spiritual reflection and cultural appreciation.



Ha. Utheemu Kandhuvalu Miskiyy is a captivating destination for those interested in the rich spiritual and historical tapestry of the Maldives. This revered mosque, constructed around the same time as the nearby Utheemu Ganduvaru, is deeply intertwined with the legacy of Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu, the national hero who liberated the Maldives from Portuguese rule in the 16th century. Before embarking on their courageous missions, Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu and his brothers offered prayers at this very mosque, seeking divine guidance and strength. The mosque's architecture is a testament to traditional Maldivian craftsmanship, featuring intricately carved coral stone and teak wood interiors. Adjacent to the mosque lies a cemetery where prominent figures, including the Sultan's father, are interred, adding to the site's historical significance. Visiting Kandhuvalu Miskiyy offers a profound glimpse into the spiritual practices and resilience of the Maldivian people during a pivotal era in their history.

Ha. Utheemu Beach, located on the northernmost island of the Maldives' Haa Alif Atoll, offers a serene and picturesque escape for travelers seeking tranquility and natural beauty. This pristine stretch of white sand, bordered by the turquoise hues of the Indian Ocean, provides an idyllic setting for relaxation and reflection. The gentle lapping of the waves and the rustling of palm trees create a soothing ambiance, making it an ideal spot for leisurely walks, sunbathing, or simply unwinding in a peaceful environment. The beach's unspoiled charm and the island's rich cultural heritage make Ha. Utheemu Beach a must-visit destination for those looking to experience the authentic and unhurried pace of Maldivian island life.



Ha. Utheemu Kalhuohfummi is a legendary vessel that played a pivotal role in the Maldives' struggle for independence from Portuguese colonial rule in the 16th century. Crafted by Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu and his brothers on the island of Baarah in Haa Alif Atoll, the boat was designed for stealth and speed, enabling them to launch nighttime raids against Portuguese forces.





Introduction

Nestled in the tranquil expanse of Ha. Utheemu in the Maldives' northernmost Haa Alif Atoll, Utheemu Ganduvaru stands as a testament to the nation's rich cultural heritage and architectural ingenuity. This 16th-century wooden palace is not merely a structure of timber and coral stone; it is a symbol of resilience, tradition, and the indomitable spirit of the Maldivian people. Serving as the birthplace and childhood home of Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu, a revered national hero, Utheemu Ganduvaru offers a unique glimpse into the lifestyle and values of a bygone era.

Historical Significance

The Maldives' history is marked by periods of foreign influence and resistance. From 1558 to 1573, the archipelago fell under Portuguese colonial rule. During this tumultuous period, Mohamed Thakurufaanu, along with his brothers and a dedicated group of compatriots, orchestrated a series of covert operations to reclaim their homeland.

Utilizing a vessel named Kalhuohfuummi, they launched nighttime raids on Portuguese strongholds, gradually weakening the occupiers' grip on the islands. Their perseverance culminated in the liberation of Malé in 1573, leading to the end of Portuguese rule and the restoration of Maldivian sovereignty. In recognition of his leadership and valor, Mohamed Thakurufaanu was crowned Sultan, ushering in the Utheemu dynasty.

Architectural Marvel

Utheemu Ganduvaru's architecture reflects the traditional Maldivian building techniques of the 16th century. Constructed primarily from coral stone and indigenous timber, the palace showcases the resourcefulness and craftsmanship of its builders. The walls, woven from thin stems of Dhunburi and bound with coir rope, are covered with coconut thatch, providing natural insulation against the tropical climate. Intricate wooden carvings adorn the structure, highlighting the aesthetic sensibilities of the era. The layout is designed to ensure optimal ventilation, with high ceilings and large windows facilitating airflow, thereby maintaining a cool interior even during the hottest months.

Cultural and Social Context

Beyond its architectural features, Utheemu Ganduvaru offers insights into the social and cultural fabric of 16th-century Maldivian society.

The residence comprises living quarters, storage spaces, and communal areas, all arranged to reflect the daily life of a prominent family of the time. Visitors can observe artifacts and furnishings that provide a window into the customs, traditions, and values upheld by the inhabitants. The presence of a palm-thatch hut within the palace grounds, used as a guestroom, further underscores the hospitality and communal spirit prevalent in the community.

Preservation and Modern-Day Relevance

Recognizing the historical and cultural importance of Utheemu Ganduvaru, efforts have been made to preserve and maintain the palace for future generations. Renovations over the years have ensured the structural integrity of the building, while also retaining its authentic charm. The palace now functions as a museum, offering guided tours that educate visitors about the life and times of Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu, as well as the broader historical context of the Maldives during the 16th century.

Conclusion

Utheemu Ganduvaru stands as more than just a historical monument; it is a living testament to the resilience, ingenuity, and cultural richness of the Maldivian people. Through its preservation, the legacy of Sultan Mohamed Thakurufaanu and the traditions of the 16th century continue to inspire and educate, bridging the past with the present. For those seeking to understand the depths of Maldivian history and heritage, a visit to Utheemu Ganduvaru is an invaluable experience.



Muraidhoo



THE BANANA ISLAND

Muraidhoo is a vibrant inhabited island in the northernmost reaches of the Maldives, situated within the Haa Alif Atoll. Muraidhoo is renowned for its agricultural prowess, particularly in banana cultivation, making it one of the largest banana producers in the country. The island's natural beauty is complemented by a mangrove wetland and a vibrant house reef teeming with manta rays, offering exceptional opportunities for snorkeling and marine exploration. Accessible via a short 10-minute speedboat ride from Hanimaadhoo International Airport, Muraidhoo provides a tranquil and authentic Maldivian experience, away from the more commercialized tourist destinations.

Ha. Muraidhoo offers an authentic Maldivian experience, blending natural beauty, rich culture, and adventure. Located in Haa Alif Atoll, this lush island is renowned for its banana cultivation, contributing significantly to the local economy. Visitors can explore its vibrant community, engage in water sports, or enjoy the tranquil beaches. The island's ongoing harbor development promises enhanced accessibility, making it an ideal destination for those seeking a peaceful yet enriching getaway.

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Ha. Muraidhoo, nestled in the northern reaches of the Maldives' Haa Alif Atoll, stands as a testament to the nation's agricultural heritage. Among its many contributions, the island is renowned for its thriving banana cultivation, making it one of the largest banana producers in the country. This agricultural prowess not only supports the local economy but also plays a vital role in sustaining the community's way of life. The island's fertile soil and favorable climate create an ideal environment for banana farming, allowing for year-round production. Bananas from Muraidhoo are highly sought after, both locally and in neighboring regions, due to their quality and taste. The cultivation process is deeply rooted in tradition, with techniques passed down through generations, ensuring the preservation of cultural practices.



Beyond its agricultural significance, Muraidhoo's banana farms offer a unique opportunity for visitors to engage with the island's rich farming culture. Tourists can explore the lush plantations, learn about sustainable farming practices, and even participate in the harvesting process. In essence, Ha. Muraidhoo's banana farms are not just an economic asset but also a cultural cornerstone, reflecting the island's commitment to preserving its agricultural heritage while embracing sustainable practices for the future.



Muraidhoo Corner Dive Site, located off the coast of Ha. Muraidhoo, is a hidden gem for diving enthusiasts seeking both adventure and tranquility beneath the waves. Known for its vibrant coral gardens and rich marine biodiversity, the site features dramatic overhangs, small canyons, and an "aquarium" section adorned with soft corals in vivid shades of blue and yellow. Divers are often greeted by schools of snappers, fusiliers, jacks, reef sharks, turtles, and even graceful eagle rays gliding through the currents. Suitable for both beginners and experienced divers, Muraidhoo Corner promises an unforgettable underwater experience in one of the Maldives' most untouched marine environments.



Ha. Muraidhoo offers a unique surfing experience for enthusiasts seeking a more tranquil and authentic Maldivian surf adventure. While the island itself isn't renowned for its surf breaks, its proximity to nearby surf spots provides convenient access to quality waves. The island's elevated terrain and lush greenery offer picturesque views, creating a serene backdrop for surfers looking to enjoy the sport away from the more crowded and commercialized areas. Whether you're a seasoned surfer or a beginner eager to catch your first wave, Muraidhoo's surroundings offer a peaceful and immersive surfing experience in the Maldives.





Baarah



THE NATURAL HARBOUR ISLAND



Ha.Baarah is a contemporary fashion and lifestyle brand known for its fusion of traditional craftsmanship with modern design sensibilities. Rooted in cultural heritage, the brand emphasizes artisanal techniques, sustainable practices, and thoughtful storytelling through its collections. Ha.Baarah aims to create timeless pieces that celebrate individuality, elegance, and ethical fashion.

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The Old Mosque of Ha.Baarah, also known as Baarah Hukuru Miskiyy, stands as a testament to the island's rich Islamic heritage and architectural prowess. Constructed in the early 16th century, it is among the oldest coral stone mosques in the Maldives. Built primarily using coral sandstone (veligaa) and porite coral (hirigaa), the mosque showcases the traditional Maldivian craftsmanship of the era.



Architecturally, the mosque reflects the typical Maldivian style of the period, featuring a simple yet elegant design with intricately carved coral stone walls and a wooden roof. Its historical significance is further accentuated by its association with Sultan Ghazi Muhammad Thakurufaanu, who is said to have used the mosque during his time. Today, the Ha.Baarah Old Mosque remains an active place of worship and a symbol of the island's enduring Islamic legacy. Its preservation offers valuable insights into the Maldives' architectural and religious history, making it a significant site for both spiritual reflection and cultural exploration.



The Berebedhi area of Ha.Baarah is renowned for its rich and diverse ecosystem, particularly its expansive mangrove forests, which rank among the largest in the Maldives. This ecologically significant region supports a wide variety of flora and fauna, including several endemic and migratory bird species, making it an important habitat for bio-diversity. The mangroves also play a crucial role in coastal protection, carbon sequestration, and sustaining local livelihoods through traditional fishing and resource gathering. Ongoing conservation efforts highlight the community's commitment to preserving this unique natural environment for future generations.



The Kalhuohfummi was a legendary vessel constructed on Ha.Baarah in the latter half of the 16th century. This ship played a pivotal role in Sultan Muhammad Thakurufaanu's resistance against Portuguese colonial forces in the Maldives. The construction site of the Kalhuohfummi remains a site of historical significance, reflecting the island's rich maritime heritage and its central role in the Maldives' resistance against foreign occupation. Today, Ha.Baarah continues to honor this legacy, preserving the memory of the Kalhuohfummi and its role in the nation's history.



Cultural Gems: Performances That Tell Our Story

HA. Kelaa Maliku Dhandi is a unique and culturally significant traditional stick dance that is exclusive to the island of Kelaa in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. Although its name references Maliku (Minicoy), the dance is not practiced there, making it a distinctive heritage of Kelaa alone. Passed down through generations, Maliku Dhandi is performed with decorated sticks and accompanied by rhythmic drumming, reflecting the community's deep-rooted commitment to preserving their cultural identity. The tradition is actively maintained by local youth, especially through the efforts of the Kelaa Dhandi Group, ensuring its continued relevance and celebration in contemporary Maldivian culture.



HA. Kelaa Dhigu Magu Dhandi is a unique traditional dance performed exclusively on the island of Kelaa in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. This cultural performance, traditionally held during Eid celebrations and other special occasions, traces its origins to the era of the Maldivian sultanate. Historically, it is believed to have been performed by workers after completing royal duties, as a gesture of celebration and gratitude. The dance features participants moving in two rows with decorated sticks, singing traditional songs that increase in rhythm as they near a symbolic offering—an act known as Dhafi Negun. Performed today mostly by women dressed in black with red and green veils, the dance takes place along the island's main roads, accompanied by rhythmic drumming and singing. Dhigu Magu Dhandi stands as a unique expression of Kelaa's heritage, preserving a distinct aspect of Maldivian history, identity, and communal pride through performance and tradition.



HA. Vashafaru Boduberu is a distinctive traditional music and dance form originating from Vashafaru, an island in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. While Boduberu is widespread across the Maldives, Vashafaru's rendition is unique due to its local variations and the island's rich cultural heritage. The performance typically features a large drum (boduberu) accompanied by a chorus of singers and dancers. What sets Vashafaru's Boduberu apart is the incorporation of island-specific rhythms and melodies, reflecting the community's unique identity. The dancers often wear traditional attire, and the performances are characterized by energetic movements and synchronized steps.



Historically, Boduberu was performed during communal gatherings and celebrations, serving as a medium for storytelling and social cohesion. Today, it continues to be a vital part of Vashafaru's cultural expressions, preserving the island's traditions and fostering a sense of community pride.



HA. Baarah Koadi is a distinctive cultural practice celebrated on the island of Baarah in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. This tradition involves the creation of a "Koadi," a wooden pole adorned with palm fronds and colorful decorations, symbolizing community spirit and unity. During Eid, the men of the island attempt to retrieve the Koadi from a coconut tree, guarded by the women, in a playful and spirited manner. The successful individual is honored with a feast and participates in the Alhi Dheli Maali parade the following day. This unique celebration fosters a sense of camaraderie and preserves the rich cultural heritage of the Maldives.

Northern Bites: Signature Cuisine of Haa Atoll

HA. Dhidhdhoo Hichaa Bai is a distinctive culinary tradition unique to the island of Dhidhdhoo in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. This dish, known locally as Hithi or Hichaa Bai, is a traditional Maldivian preparation typically served during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. It holds cultural significance as a communal meal shared among families and neighbors, fostering a sense of community and togetherness.



The primary ingredients of Hichaa Bai include locally sourced fish, coconut, and a blend of spices, reflecting the island's rich maritime heritage. The preparation method and specific ingredients may vary, but the dish consistently embodies the flavors and culinary practices passed down through generations. In Dhidhdhoo, Hichaa Bai is not merely a meal but a cultural expression that showcases the island's unique traditions and the importance of communal dining in strengthening social bonds.

utheemu Metaa Gandu, is a traditional Maldivian confection unique to the island of utheemu in Haa Alif Atoll. This delicacy is crafted from Hmetaa (sea almonds), a local nut, and is renowned for its rich flavor and cultural significance. The preparation of Hmetaa Gandu involves a meticulous process where the sea almonds are carefully harvested, roasted, and combined with natural sweeteners to create a chewy, nutty treat. The recipe has been passed down through generations, preserving the island's culinary heritage.



utheemu Hmetaa Gandu is not merely a snack but a symbol of the island's rich traditions and community spirit. It is often prepared during festive occasions and shared among residents and visitors, embodying the warmth and hospitality of utheemu. This unique confection continues to be a cherished part of the island's cultural identity.

HA. Baarah Dhigu Baipen is a unique and culturally significant traditional dish from the island of Baarah in Haa Alif Atoll, Maldives. This rich and creamy rice porridge, locally known as Dhigu Baipen, holds a special place in the island's culinary heritage and is most commonly prepared during festive occasions such as Eid. Made with rice, coconut milk, and a blend of aromatic spices, Dhigu Baipen is both nourishing and flavorful. It is often served with traditional side dishes and enjoyed as part of communal meals, highlighting the islanders' strong sense of community and hospitality.



What sets Baarah's Dhigu Baipen apart is not just its taste, but also the tradition surrounding its preparation and sharing. Passed down through generations, it symbolizes unity, generosity, and cultural pride. Today, it continues to be a cherished part of local celebrations, reflecting the deep-rooted values and identity of the people of Baarah.



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