

Maldives

Capital:	Male
Land:	300 sq km
Currency (code):	rufiyaa (MVR)
Exchange rates:	rufiyaa per US dollar - NA (2007), 12.8 (2006), 12.8 (2005), 12.8 (2004), 12.8 (2003)
Population:	379,174 (July 2008 est.)
Age structure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 0-14 years: 42.4% (male 82,616/female 78,165) ➤ 15-64 years: 54.5% (male 105,465/female 101,115) ➤ 65 years and over: 3.1% (male 5,753/female 6,060) (2008 est.)
Population growth rate:	2.69% (2008 est.)
Religions:	Sunni Muslim
Climate:	The Maldives experiences a tropical monsoon climate, with warm, dry weather during the northeast monsoon season (December to March) and wet weather during the southwest monsoon season (May to October). Average high temperatures range between 77 and 86°F (25–30°C) year-round.

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Language:	<p>The nation's official language, Dhivehi, is spoken only in the Maldives. Although English is taught in schools, many older local islanders speak only Dhivehi. Of those people able to speak English, not all can read or write it.</p>
General Attitudes:	<p>Maldivians place great importance on their traditional Muslim society. To protect it from potentially negative Western influences brought by tourism, contact between islanders and tourists has been limited. Until recently, resorts could only be built on uninhabited islands within designated "tourism zones," and tourists could only make short visits to inhabited islands other than Malé. These restrictions were relaxed in 2006 to allow the construction of resorts on some inhabited islands, but contact between villagers and tourists is still nominal. Social pressures also control people's contact with the tourist industry. For example, many Maldivians rely on income from a male family member employed at a resort, but families are reluctant to allow daughters to work at resorts, as a stigma is attached to females working far from home in a predominantly male environment. Maldivians are friendly and tolerant of foreign visitors, who may act in ways they neither understand nor approve of. People not only welcome the income the tourists bring but are also genuinely proud that foreigners choose to visit their country.</p>
Greetings:	<p>Maldivians greet each other with a handshake and a smile. Hugs and kisses are usually reserved for children or for family members who are leaving on or returning from an extended period away. <i>Haalu kihineh?</i> (How are you?) and its abbreviated form, <i>Kihineh-tha?</i>, are common greetings. A typical response is <i>Rangalhu</i> or <i>Baraabar</i> (both meaning "Fine" or "Good"). It is also</p>

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	<p>acceptable to answer <i>Sacaraaiy</i> (meaning roughly “Things are not great”).</p> <p>Maldivians have a given name and a surname. The latter is their father’s surname. Either name may be used to address men, according to individual preference. Women do not take the surnames of their husbands. To indicate affection, a man may be called <i>Beybe</i> (Brother) or have a shortened version of the word, <i>Bey</i>, added to the end of his name. Likewise, a woman may be called <i>Dhaththa</i> (Sister) or have the word <i>Tha</i> added to her name. The word <i>Koh</i> (a form of <i>Kokko</i>, which means “little brother or sister”) is added to the end of children’s names. It is also common for Maldivians to be addressed by a shortened version of their name. For example, <i>Mariyam</i> may be called <i>Mari</i> or <i>Muhammed</i> may be called <i>Mode</i>.</p>
Labor force:	101,300 (2004)
Labor force - by occupation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>agriculture</i>: 22% ➤ <i>industry</i>: 18% ➤ <i>services</i>: 60% (1995)
Unemployment rate:	Not Available
Inflation rate (consumer prices):	6% (2005 est.)
Natural resources:	fish

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Exports:	\$167 million f.o.b. (2006)
Exports – commodities:	fish
Exports - partners:	Thailand 33.1%, UK 14.3%, Sri Lanka 11.9%, Japan 10.3%, France 6.9%, Algeria 6.1% (2006)
Imports:	\$930 million f.o.b. (2006)
Imports – commodities:	petroleum products, ships, foodstuffs, clothing, intermediate and capital goods
Imports - partners:	Singapore 23.2%, UAE 15.8%, India 11.1%, Malaysia 7.9%, Thailand 6.9%, Sri Lanka 5.6% (2006)

References:

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