



Maldives

Joined the Commonwealth in 1982 - visited by the Queen in 1972



Maldives is a small island nation in the Indian Ocean

Pop: (2012) 338,000

Capital: Malé

Area: 298 sq km

The 1,900 coral islands (200 of them inhabited) of the Maldives form a long archipelago of coral atolls over 823 km long and 130 km wide at its widest. Maldives is disadvantaged by its thinly spread population, lack of resources and its great distance from any centre of economic activity.

The hot tropical climate yields over 1,654mm of monsoonal rainfall a year giving rise to dense groves of coconut palms, breadfruit and pines. Soils are thin and unproductive. Most of the islands in the chain are very small and rise no more than 2m above sea level. There is an international airport at Malé which also serves the islands by seaplane or helicopter. There are no hills or rivers – just stunningly beautiful white beaches and crystal clear lagoons which attract tourists bringing well needed revenue. Diving and snorkelling are popular.

Over 1,000 species of fish are found in Maldivian waters. Fishermen use the breeding colonies of frigate birds and noddies to find schools of tuna.



Malé's International airport on Hulhule island - there is a 2 km transfer by boat to the capital

