

THE SECOND MANTA RETREAT TO TAKE PLACE THIS MARCH AT INTERCONTINENTAL MALDIVES



Maldives, January 2023: In October 2022, when the first Manta Retreat was launched at InterContinental Maldives Maamunagau Resort, guests of the luxury resort got to experience the magic of meeting these gentle underwater giants up close while learning and exploring the research and education around them. In collaboration with the resort-based Manta Trust organisation, a thoughtfully curated programme was made available to guests to educate, explore and raise awareness for manta rays in their natural habitat.

Aimed at adventure travellers, nature lovers, young explorers, and those who wish to add more meaning to their holidays, the Manta Retreat is the perfect combination of a luxury holiday and education.

Already known for its fantastic and perfect location to swim and snorkel with manta rays all year round, the InterContinental Maldives is now launching the second Manta Retreat this March 2023. This unique experience includes more than just snorkelling with manta rays but also offers deep insights into the research surrounding them as well as many more educational experiences that offer a holistic understanding of these marine animals and their habitat.

Participants of the Manta Retreat can look forward to many mind-blowing manta encounters but will also learn about plankton, coral reefs and, most importantly, marine protection. "The Manta Retreat is the perfect holiday programme for everyone passionate about marine life and our oceans. I am very excited to lead the retreat for the first time this year, and to help our participants to saturate their need for meeting mantas" says Farah Hamdan, the Manta Trust base leader at Maamunagau who has recently taken over the post from Jessica Haynes.

This year's Manta Retreat falls into the Maamunagau Manta Season, where young manta rays are found in the resort's lagoon just a few minutes away from shore. The Maamunagau Lagoon is a known juvenile manta ray aggregation point and a significant research ground for the Manta Trust team. "We can assume our lagoon to be a manta ray nursery. We still don't know where manta rays are born, but many juvenile manta rays hang around in our lagoon from December

to April. This is a research haven for us, while we, of course, love to head out to Hanifaru Bay during the season as well to observe and research the massive aggregation of mantas there." explains Farah.

Hanifaru Bay is a world-famous, manta ray feeding station. From June to October, large groups of manta rays can be found here, feeding on the plankton washed into the bay by the turning current. The bay is only a short boat ride away from InterContinental Maldives, to which excursions are also offered during the season.

The manta retreat will take place from 9th to 13th March 2023, and included are several snorkelling and research trips, on-hand educational workshops, as well as excursions to find turtles and learn about corals. The purpose of the Manta Retreat is to educate participants and ocean aficionados on manta rays and their protection, whilst raising funds to support the work of the Manta Trust.

Guests staying at InterContinental Maldives also have the opportunity to enjoy the luxury resort's facilities as well as their villa or residence accommodation. There is also plenty to keep family members and kids busy in case some family members or the travel partner is not participating in the retreat. Additional activities can be booked or can extend the stay beyond the retreat if more time is needed to make the most out of the trip to the Maldives.

For certified divers, options are available to ensure all guests find their individual way of interacting with manta rays. Dedicated dive spots are in the area around the resort that allows divers to observe the natural manta ray 'spa', known as cleaning stations, showcasing the incredible symbiosis of marine life in the Maldives.

THE MANTA RETREAT

The Manta Retreat will take place from 9th to 13th March 2023 at the InterContinental Maldives Maamunagau Resort. The participation fee for the manta retreat is USD 1950 for an adult and USD 1350 for children of the ages 10 and 11. Activities included are three manta ray snorkelling trips, house reef night snorkelling experience, sunset dolphin cruise, several workshops to learn more about manta rays, plankton, turtles, coral restoration and more.

Guests participating in the Manta Retreat, are eligible for a 25% discount on their stay (discount applies on nightly rate only) if they book for a minimum of five nights or more.

All prices are quoted in USD, including 10% Service Charge and 16% GST.

Additional experiences such as diving and snorkelling trips, cruises, excursions or spa and wellness treatments can be booked individually for additional charges. Upon request, one on one sessions with the Manta Biologist can be arranged privately.

HOW TO BOOK

For more information, please visit <https://maldives.intercontinental.com/sustainability/manta-retreat> or contact the reservations team with the booking code "Manta Retreat" at reservations.icmaldives@ihg.com or contact us on WhatsApp at [+960 730 9300](tel:+9607309300).

ABOUT MANTA TRUST

The Manta Trust is one of the world's leading manta ray research organisations. Using co-ordinated global research to aid conservation efforts surrounding manta rays, their relatives and their habitats, the Manta Trust aims to achieve global conservation through Research, Education and Collaboration.

Recognizing the unique privilege of occupying an island in such close proximity to a newly discovered juvenile manta feeding ground, InterContinental Maldives began working in collaboration with the Manta Trust in 2019. The area around InterContinental Maldives Maamunagau Resort is home to a large and healthy population of manta rays which provides Manta Trust researchers based at the resort incredible access to study these animals.

Reef manta rays are listed as “vulnerable” and Oceanic manta rays as “endangered” on the IUCN Red List, the work we do here helps to increase knowledge and understanding, which can be used to guide conservation measures both here in the Maldives but also around the world where manta populations are much smaller, and often threatened. Our team of Manta Trust researchers welcome our guests to join them for educational presentations and sustainably ran excursions.

ABOUT INTERCONTINENTAL MALDIVES MAAMUNAGAU RESORT

InterContinental Maldives Maamunagau Resort is an exclusive destination getaway offering a unique opportunity for those looking to unwind and reconnect in an enviable island setting, where exclusive privileges go hand in hand with the personal touch of our signature service at InterContinental Hotels & Resorts' first and only all-Club InterContinental resort. Located in the Raa Atoll; 35 minutes by seaplane from the Velana International Airport, InterContinental Maldives Maamunagau Resort is an award-winning island escape offering beach, lagoon and overwater villas and residences with up to three bedrooms. Curated dining and wellness experiences, an extensive kids club as well as the Retreat, an adult only enclave, along with a myriad of recreational adventures for families and couples alike are also available

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