

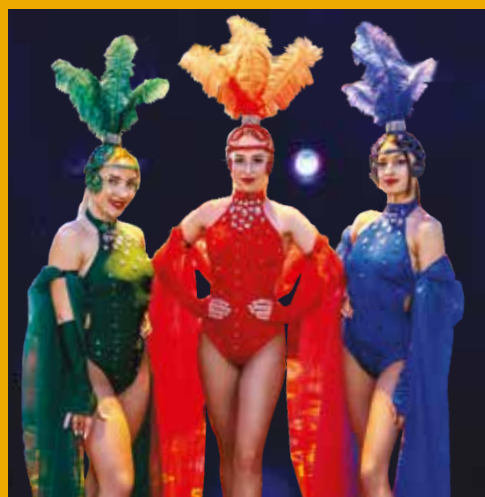
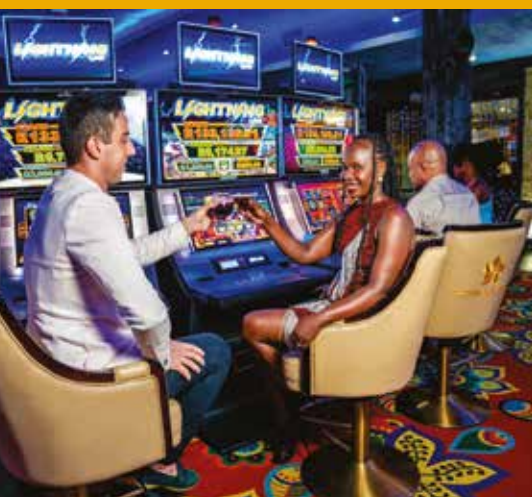
silhouette

Inflight Magazine for Air Seychelles • April - June 2024



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Dear Guests, Welcome aboard!

Welcome aboard Air Seychelles! We are looking forward to soar the skies with you and to treat you to our award-winning hospitality and creole warmth. Sit back, relax and enjoy the journey ahead.

This year, on 29 June, our paradise islands will be celebrating 48 years of Independence and on 18 June, our Constitutional Day. If you are in Seychelles during this time, you are in for a patriotic treat as our people celebrate these days with all the flair and pomp they deserve. You can even hop over to Praslin on one of our twin otters to join in the fun there or charter a scenic flight just for your travel party and take in the wonderful sights below.

In this issue of our inflight magazine, we invite you to discover the destinations on our regional network, see pages 26, 31, 36, 42, 48, 54 to start planning those summer getaways. Quick, direct and hassle-free flights are what you can expect when you fly with the national carrier, meaning you can start enjoying your trip much earlier. We make it easy to book your holidays or business trips, simply visit our website www.airseychelles.com and keep an eye on the promotions page for our frequent special deals.

As for your experience at the airport and onboard, we encourage you to send us your feedback either through our post-flight survey or via email to feedback@airseychelles.com. Your opinion and suggestions will be taken into account and used to better our service and product. So, thank you for helping us to help you.

Until your next flight with us, allow me to wish you a Bon voyage!



Captain Sandy Benoiton
Chief Executive Officer



“

Quick, direct
and hassle-free
flights

”

Features



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The precious stone of Seychelles

Yes, it is the oldest and smallest monument in the Seychelles archipelago, and it could have been lost forever if not for a strait-laced British Colonial administrator.



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Sizzling splendour

It's an experience that captures the essence of this thriving city. Summer, from the beautiful seafronts to the bustling festivals, is a celebration of Mumbai's variety, tenacity, and unwavering spirit.



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Exploring the warmth of Colombo

It is a celebration of life, culture, and the seaside beauty that characterises this intriguing city. It is a sensory feast that makes an indelible imprint on those who embrace its warmth, from the sun-drenched promenades to the cultural festivals and culinary delights.



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The oldest race track in the Southern Hemisphere

It has become the ultimate meeting place for racing fanatics from all over the island and even from abroad. Thousands more do the same thing from home, watching the races on television.



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Banana reef. Where solitude is sublime

This crept into travellers' bucket lists when it was discovered to be Maldives first world-class diving spot, and still continues to do so, for no matter how many other dive sites are discovered in the archipelago, this one has always remained the most popular.



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Ideal time to explore

Whether you prefer cultural experiences, outdoor adventures, or culinary delights, Johannesburg has a diverse range of activities to suit various interests, even during the winter months.



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Embracing the vibrant summer vibes

Tel Aviv's combination of culture, cuisine, and coastline beauty makes it a must-see destination for visitors looking for a memorable and exciting summer vacation.



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The magic of mud therapy

The basic mud could come to the rescue in tough and stressful circumstances, which would come as no surprise to ancient Greek doctors, traditional healers in Africa and Asia, and possibly even hippos or elephant matriarchs who recall the finest areas for the family to wallow.

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Cover image
Aerial view of Anse Intendance beach
Image © Freepik.com

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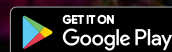
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Club Liberté is also home to the award winning **5 Spices Restaurant** which offers a variety of choices, ranging from an extensive à la carte option, with both Creole and Internationally recognized cuisine, plus an outstanding "always fresh" **sushi** menu that is rated as amongst the very best on Mahé.

Our **Casino** & bar opens at 2pm for Slots play / 6pm for tables games, and closes at 2am.

The **Restaurant** opens at 6pm until 11pm for all formal dining.



To avoid disappointment we highly recommend booking a restaurant reservation in advance.

Entrance is only permitted to persons over 18 years of age, dress code is casual and a valid ID is required by law should you wish to play in the Casino.



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Constitution Day

Date: 18 June 2024

Venue: Victoria

Seychelles Constitution Day, also called National Day, is celebrated on 18 June yearly, marking the declaration of the referendum in 1993 that made Seychelles a multi-party democracy. It is celebrated on the three main islands, Mahé, Praslin and La Digue.

Flag hoisting is done in the morning by Seychellois men and women in uniform and the national anthem is played in front of distinguished guests and dignitaries. Then the President addresses the Nation.

Seychelles Constitution Day involves a parade in Stade Linite with the president and high government officials present.



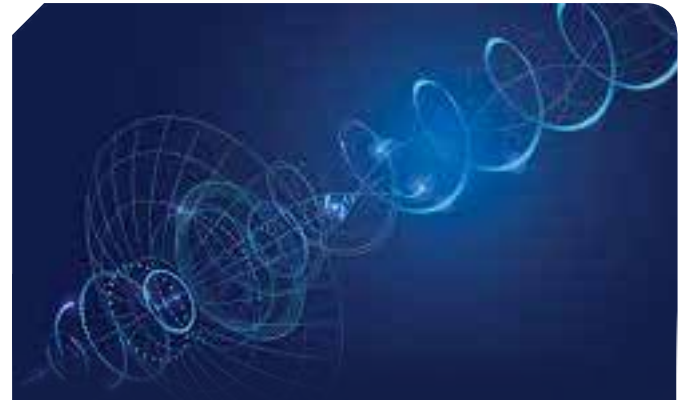
Independence Day

Date: 29 June 2024

Venue: Victoria

Independence Day is the most important occasion in Seychelles as it is linked to a defining moment in its history. This date symbolises the birth of a people, hope for the future, the achievement of victory, the crowning of a struggle. It also represents the unity of a people in a great manifestation of patriotic fervour.

The Seychelles has been a member of the Commonwealth of Nations ever since it was granted independence in 1976. Seychellois and visitors to Seychelles will be treated to impressive displays of national pride and patriotism during the National Day celebrations and will as usual be seen waving the colourful blue, yellow, red, white and green Seychelles flags as fireworks displays light up the evening skies.

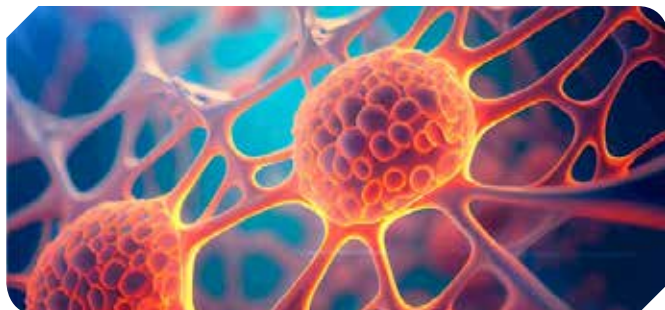


International Conference on Wireless Networks and Mobile Communication (EUIWNMC)

Date: 4 July 2024

Venue: Victoria, Seychelles

EUIWNMC intends to investigate the many difficulties in Wireless Networks and Mobile Communications. The conference will give an opportunity for researchers and professionals from academia and industry interested in Wireless Networks and Mobile Communications to exchange ideas, explore solutions, and share their experiences.



International Conference on Cell and Tissue Science (ICCTS)

Date: 18 June 2024

Venue: Anse Boileau

The conference provides a forum for professionals involved in Cell and Tissue Science to exchange ideas and receive insight into the most recent technology, techniques, and solutions in Cell and Tissue Science as they have been developed and utilised in various nations. Participants comprise a diverse range of stakeholders, from research and academia to industry and government organisations.

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Eid al-Fitr

Date: 09-10 April 2024

Venue: Malé, Maldives

In the Maldives, this local celebration is known as *Bodu Eid* (large Eid) because of the *Bodu Mas* (huge fish) tradition that is observed in many regions of the country, primarily on local islands. Family and friends travel long distances to spend this time with loved ones.

Eid is very widely celebrated in the Maldives and the day begins with an early morning Eid Prayer, a congregational event with the mosque flooding with worshippers. The celebrations in the country's capital city of Malé are entirely different and vibrant from the other islands with lots of activities during the afternoon. The most famous event is the water balloon throwing competition. DJs throw parties on the beaches where everyone is invited to have fun, dance to some tunes, eat, and play some games. The Maali Hingun or Maali parade is also another fun walk event, where people wear unique costumes and masks.



Yom HaAtzma'ut 2024

Date: 14 May 2024

Venue: Mount Herzl, Jerusalem

Every year on Independence Day, an official celebration is held on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem in the evening. The ceremony consists of a speech by the speaker of the Knesset (Israel's parliament), cultural performances, the construction of elaborate structures (such as a Menorah or Magen David), and the ceremonial lighting of twelve lamps, one for each of Israel's tribes. Every year, twelve Israelis with noteworthy social achievements in a certain region are invited to light the candles. Many cities provide outdoor entertainment in city squares, with top Israeli singers and fireworks displays. Cars are prohibited from driving through the streets surrounding the squares, allowing people to sing and dance.

Buddha Purnima

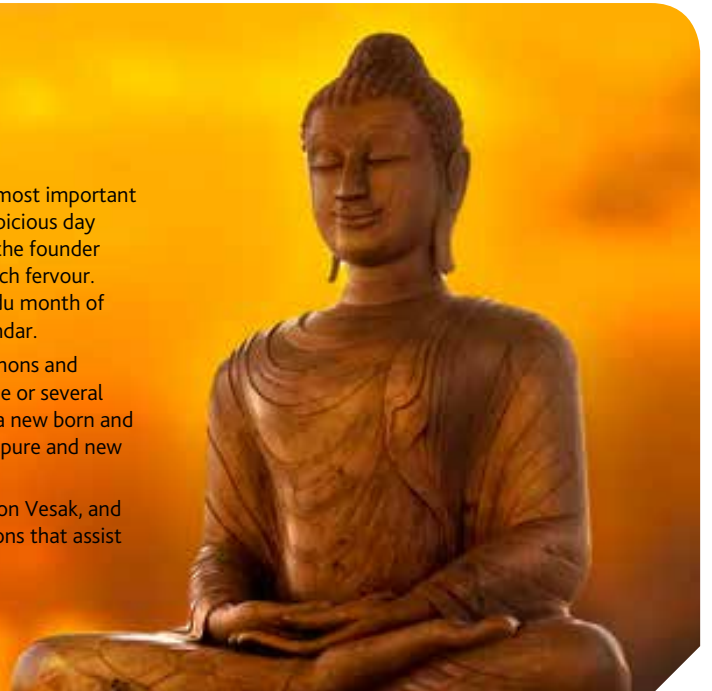
Date: 15 May 2024

Venue: India

Buddha Purnima, also known as Vesak or Buddha Jayanti, is the most important festival for the followers of Buddhism across the world. This auspicious day marks the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, and is celebrated by Buddhist community with much fervour. The festival falls on the first full moon day (Purnima) of the Hindu month of Vaisakha, which corresponds to April-May in the Gregorian calendar.

Many Buddhists go to temples on Vesak to hear monks give sermons and read old verses. Devout Buddhists may spend an entire day in one or several temples. Some temples feature a miniature figure of Buddha as a new born and visitors to the shrine pour water on the statue. This represents a pure and new beginning.

Many Buddhists devote special attention to Buddha's teachings on Vesak, and many individuals donate money, food, or products to organisations that assist the impoverished, the aged, and the sick.





Africa's Big 7: Where food & beverage retail business

Date: 11- 13 June 2024

Venue: Convention Centre, Sandton – Johannesburg

Africa's Big 7 celebrates its 21st edition and remains Africa's premier retail-ready food and beverage trade show. The event features a global array of exhibitors, food and beverage communities, and industry experts. It is an excellent location for sourcing, trend-spotting, and networking with leading trade buyers and influencers. The 2024 edition will establish a new standard, demonstrating the potential to change the food and beverage industry in this vibrant region.

Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) 25th World Marketing Congress (WMC) 2024

Date: 25-29 June 2024

Venue: Heritage Awali Golf and Spa Resort, Bel-Ombre, Mauritius

The Academy of Marketing Science (AMS) 25th World Marketing Congress (WMC) 2024 will focus on global marketing issues and innovations such as Entrepreneurial Marketing, Interactive Marketing, International Marketing, Marketing Education & Pedagogy, Marketing, Society & Public Policy, Marketing Strategy, Marketing Theory, Pricing & Revenue Management, Research Methodology, Retailing, Selling & Sales Management, and Service Marketing.



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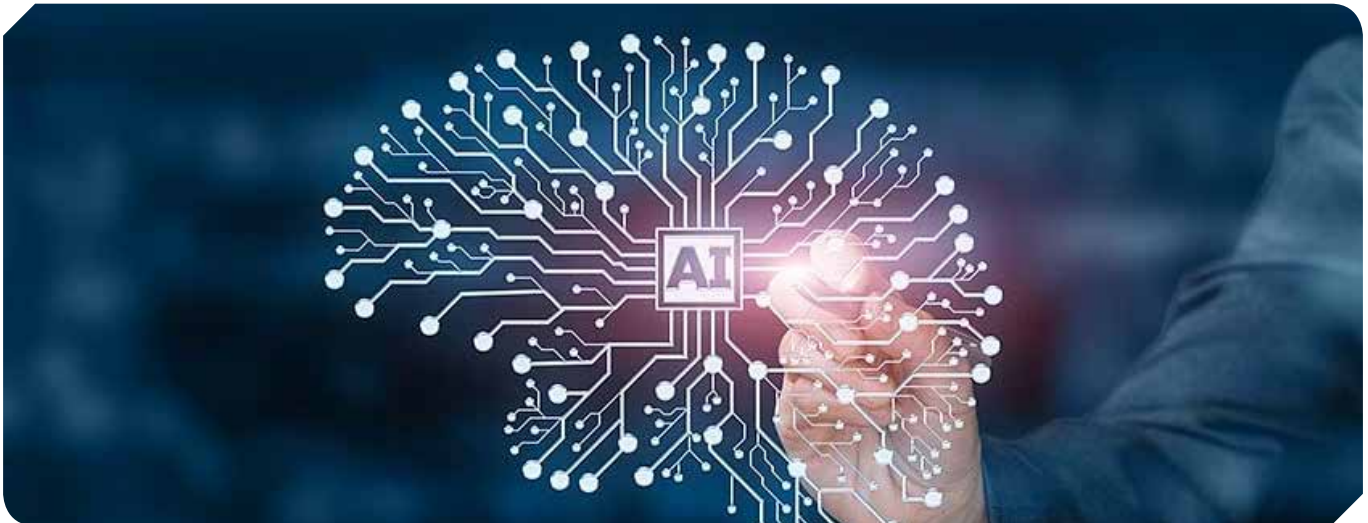
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Advancing technologies 2024

Certainly! Technologies are continually evolving and advancing in a variety of industries. Here are some significant advancements in some fields:



An all-inclusive AI-driven world

An all-inclusive AI-driven world envisions a future in which artificial intelligence (AI) technology is seamlessly integrated into different elements of human life, society, and the economy, to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all persons. Here are some crucial characteristics of an all-inclusive AI-powered world:

Accessibility for all: Technology should be built so that individuals of all abilities and backgrounds can use it. This includes considerations for people with impairments, distinct cultural backgrounds, and varied socioeconomic statuses.

Education and training: There should be extensive education and training programmes to provide people with the skills necessary to understand, use, and contribute to AI technologies. This ensures that the benefits of AI are spread throughout the population.

Ethical and fair AI: AI systems should be designed and implemented with a significant emphasis on ethics and justice. This includes correcting biases, maintaining openness, and preventing prejudice in AI algorithms and decision-making processes.

Healthcare advancements: Artificial intelligence has the potential to greatly improve diagnosis, treatment regimens, and personalised medicine. An inclusive AI-driven future will ensure that healthcare solutions are accessible and inexpensive to individuals all around the world.

Job transition support: Because AI automation may cause changes in the labour market, an inclusive AI-driven future would aid those affected

by these changes. This includes retraining initiatives, career guidance, and policies that ensure a smooth transfer.

Cultural sensitivity: AI applications should respect and adapt to various cultural norms and values. This helps to avoid prejudices and guarantees that AI technologies are recognised and embraced across societies.

Privacy and security: Strong privacy and security safeguards are required to protect persons from the possible misuse of AI technology. An all-inclusive AI-driven world would emphasise the creation and implementation of privacy and security regulations.

Environmental sustainability: AI technology must be considered in terms of its environmental impact. Sustainable practices, energy-efficient algorithms, and ethical resource usage all contribute to a society powered by AI that is inclusive and considers global environmental problems.

Global collaboration: International collaboration and cooperation are essential for guaranteeing that AI advantages are disseminated globally. This entails sharing knowledge, resources, and best practices to address common issues and build a fairer AI landscape.

User-centric design: AI applications should be created with a user-centric mindset, considering the different demands and preferences of users. This ensures that AI technologies are user-friendly and add significant value to individuals.

When developing an all-inclusive AI-driven world, it is critical to address not just technological breakthroughs but also social, ethical, and economic ramifications, to achieve a future in which AI improves well-being and opportunities for all.



Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR)

AR and VR offer tremendous potential in a variety of fields, including education, healthcare, entertainment, and business. As technology advances, these immersive experiences are likely to become increasingly prevalent in our daily lives, providing new ways to engage with and receive information simultaneously.

VR creates a fully realistic, computer-generated environment in which users can interact. To fully immerse people in the virtual environment, specific technology, such as VR headsets, are often required.

Key characteristics:

Immersive environment: Virtual reality isolates users from their physical surroundings and immerses them in a simulated environment, giving them a sense of presence and immersion.

Head-tracking and motion controls: VR systems frequently include head-tracking technology and motion controllers to allow users to interact with the virtual world.

Gaming: VR is commonly used in gaming to create a more immersive and realistic game environment.

VR is used for training simulations in industries such as healthcare, aviation, and the military.

Virtual meetings: VR can be used to hold virtual conferences and meetings, allowing users to feel present in a shared virtual area.

Mixed reality (MR): Some experiences incorporate features of both AR and VR, resulting in a spectrum known as mixed reality. Users can interact with both virtual and real-world components concurrently.

Extended reality (XR) is a comprehensive word that includes both VR and AR. It encompasses the full range of reality-altering technology, from entirely virtual to augmented.

5G Technology

The deployment and expansion of 5G networks are expected to bring about faster and more reliable internet connectivity, creating opportunities for communication and IoT devices. Key areas of focus include enhancing speed and capacity through technology optimisation, advanced modulation, and spectrum expansion. Reducing latency is crucial for applications like AR, VR, and self-driving vehicles, requiring advancements in network architecture, signal processing, and edge computing. Network slicing allows the creation of virtual networks tailored to specific applications, improving resource allocation. Massive MIMO increases the efficiency and capacity of 5G networks through a high number of antennas. Energy efficiency is prioritised to mitigate the environmental impact, involving optimised hardware and renewable energy sources.

Security and privacy improvements are essential, necessitating continuous research for encryption and authentication procedures. Global standardisation efforts enhance interoperability and roaming across diverse 5G networks. Integration with technologies like AI, blockchain, and IoT enhances 5G capabilities. Satellite communication inclusion expands coverage to remote areas through hybrid solutions. Regulatory support from governments and agencies is crucial for 5G deployment, fostering investment and innovation. Overall, ongoing research and innovation across various domains are shaping the future of society.



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PS Sherin Francis'

Interview with **Silhouette Magazine**

1 What have been the most noticeable changes to the tourism landscape in the ten years you have been in office?

Over the past decade, we've witnessed a transformative shift in Seychelles' tourism landscape. The key changes include a significant boost in our digital presence, evolving from a basic website to a comprehensive digital warehouse. We now leverage diverse social media channels with a keen focus on content, recognising that 'content is king.' This emphasis has led to an abundance of video and user-generated content. Our marketing strategies have also expanded globally, reaching major outlets like BBC and CNN, fostering tourism growth in India, the Americas, Russia, Israel, the Middle East, and China, among others.

2 What in your opinion makes Seychelles stand out in the tourism marketplace?

Seychelles stands out as a tourism gem due to its unparalleled natural beauty and the remarkable diversity found in its landscapes, people, culture, and flora/fauna. Initiatives like Experience Seychelles

and Creole Rendezvous offer tourists immersive touch points to explore every facet of the Seychelles experience. Furthermore, our commitment to sustainability programmes ensures the preservation of these islands, guaranteeing their beauty for generations to come.

3 What have been the major obstacles and challenges that you have faced?

Navigating challenges has involved securing and maintaining stakeholder engagement, emphasising that the department collaborates and that we don't operate in isolation. It's crucial for government departments to move in sync to avoid lagging behind in their responsibilities in this respect. Addressing the perception of Seychelles as an expensive destination is a priority, requiring accurate comparisons and dispelling misconceptions. Implementing data-driven decision-making through our strategic planning department has been a major task but an instrumental one, enabling efficient planning, improved risk management, and accurate foresight – contributing to recent positive trends in tourist numbers.





4 What is your recommendation for an ideal day out on the islands?

For an enriching day in Seychelles, I recommend starting with a tour of Victoria, exploring its vibrant market and museums to immerse yourself in who we are. Don't miss an iconic beach experience and perhaps a short nature walk along one of our trails to appreciate the unique surroundings. For a taste of our Creole culture, Mahé's craft village, featuring a Creole restaurant, serves as a touchpoint, providing tourists with an authentic Seychellois experience across a number of activities.

5 How, in your opinion, will tourism evolve over the next decade?

Over the next decade, tourism is poised to undergo a transformative shift. Traditional 'flop and drop' tourism will wane as travellers increasingly seek meaningful experiences. Experiential travel will reign supreme, as visitors crave memorable moments to cherish and take home with them. The evolving landscape will prioritise sustainability, influencing not only hotel development but also shaping the demographic of visitors. For our small island state grappling with climate change, embracing sustainability isn't just a choice; it's an imperative for the future of tourism.

6 How do you manage your family and professional lives to best effect?

Juggling my professional and family lives involves maintaining a delicate balance. Prioritising time management without procrastination is crucial, ensuring I address both family needs and extensive workplace responsibilities. Recognising and valuing the elements within my own work network, coupled with tolerance and flexibility, enables a harmonious integration of personal and professional spheres. Additionally, carving out time for self-care is essential in sustaining this equilibrium and for having the appropriate mind set to remain on top of things.



PS Sherin Francis with her family



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Seychelles

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ALPHONSE ISLAND

Blue Safari Collection





Creole Rendezvous

Getting our tourists beneath
the skin of Seychelles

WORDS: GLYNN BURRIDGE

The expectations of today's tourists are very different to what they were a decade ago. Today's travellers are, by and large, no longer content to 'flop and drop' on our beaches, however splendid they may be but rather seek a more experiential holiday that will provide them with memories to take home and share with friends and family. This means that they are increasingly in search of adventures and real exposure to the Seychelles' way of life during their stay on the islands.

In response to this perceived need on the part of our visitors for a fuller set of holiday experiences, Seychelles tourism has created Creole Rendezvous – a programme to allow visitors to Seychelles greater and deeper access to Seychelles culture, traditions and general way of life via a series of touchpoints, events and activities since its launch in mid-2023.

Since then, 'Creole Rendezvous' has transitioned into a prominent brand, strategically designed to enchant both locals and visitors to Seychelles by offering a rich tapestry of cultural experiences. Dedicated to introducing and promoting diverse 'Creole Rendezvous' experiences, the focus of this programme lies in creating activities to offer an immersive exploration of Seychellois culture and heritage. These include visits to farms, ateliers, artists' workshops; dancing and cooking lessons; farmers' markets on each of the main islands and similar happenings designed to allow visitors to mingle and exchange with the local Seychellois population.

Inspired by the 'Experience Seychelles' campaign, the brand emerged amidst the pandemic, encapsulating the spirit of Seychelles – celebrating its natural beauty, rich diversity, and vibrant Creole culture. Later recognised by the United Nations' World Tourism Organisation, the programme has sparked widespread curiosity among visitors keen to delve into various possibilities created by 'Creole Rendezvous' to take their visit to the islands to the next level.



The brand's launch is a collaborative effort involving various departments dedicated to promoting Seychelles' culture. Tourism Minister Sylvestre Radegonde, long championing the need to increase and enhance cultural offerings for Seychelles' visitors, has repeatedly emphasised the strategic value of 'Creole Rendezvous' in promoting sustainable tourism. The objectives include widening and improving the variety of tourism offerings, increasing visitor satisfaction, elevating their experiences, boosting tourist spending, and so ultimately enhancing tourism earnings.

By offering a suite of authentic cultural encounters, the aim is to have visitors become advocates of the destination who will then help to market Seychelles through their positive experiences.

Limited resources necessitate widespread collaboration with districts and inhabitants to run activities, and developing this capacity further helps to position Seychelles as a unique destination, and one keen to share its culture and traditions with its visitors.



The precious stone of Seychelles

WORDS: TONY MATHIOT

Over 200 years ago when the French claimed the Seychelles islands as their possession, they brought along a stone. That was just the beginning of the story.



R0-50

30th Anniversary of Independence 1976~2006

Pierre de Possession, 1756



Celebrate
Seychelles
2006

The crisp early morning air is laden with the salty tang of the sea. Blazing sunshine exposes the luxuriant greenery of palms and the grey of granite all around. A few yards from the edge of the coast, on open ground that slopes inland where forests and woods rise up towards a brooding range of craggy mountains, a small group of naval officers have gathered, dressed in black breeches, black boots, blue waistcoats and muskets. They stand facing a block of masonry that lies atop a flat rock, where a tall pole has been erected. Behind them, out at sea, two brigs lie at anchorage.

An officer stands slightly apart from the group, facing them. He hands over a scroll that he has finished reading to one of the men. Draped over his right arm is a large folded flag which he proceeds to hoist up the flagpole. The flag unfurls and reveals the French Royal Coat of Arms.

As the officer raises his right hand in salute, his men do likewise, in almost perfect unison, crying out: 'Long live the King! Long live the King!' And then the muskets are cocked upwards and three-salvoes are fired.

And out at sea the larger of the two ships, Le Cerf, performs her nine-gun salute, each one a thundering boom that reverberates across the blue emptiness and into the dark forested slopes of Mahé Island.

As the echoes of the last rumble begin to fade, the men move silently away from the masonry block, following the officer down to a small boat at the water's edge. That was 251 years ago. The officer was Captain Comeille Nicolas Morpheu and the masonry block was the Stone of Possession...

In the early years of the 18th century when French and British ships were prowling the Indian Ocean in search of uninhabited islands to occupy, it was customary for French ships to carry 'stones of possession' aboard. In order to forestall rival occupation, these would be placed pre-emptively

on the shores of newly discovered lands as an inviolable claim of ownership. Well, supposedly. It was a time when both empires wanted to exploit the commercial advantages of colonising foreign lands and increase their power through economic and territorial expansion.

In 1715, the year King Louis XIV 'the sun king' died after a reign of 72 years, the French took possession of Mauritius from the Dutch who had laid claim to the island in 1598, naming it after their prince, Maurice of Nassau but not settling there until 1638 when they introduced sugarcane from Jakarta. The French called their new territory Ile de France, and established coffee and sugarcane plantations and factories, bringing in slaves for labour. In 1742 the governor of Mauritius, Bertrand Francois Mahé de la Bourdonnais, had an intuitive feeling that somewhere in the vastness of the Indian Ocean, there could be more uninhabited islands awaiting exploration... and exploitation. He sent Captain Lazare Picault in the Brig L'Elizabeth, accompanied by another boat called Charles, to investigate the 'hunch'.

And indeed, after sailing for many days, the ships eventually arrived at 4 degrees 30 latitude south and 55 degrees 25 longitude east of Greenwich, anchoring at Anse Boileau. It was Thursday 19 November 1742 and there she was, 27 kilometres from north to south. The captain was awed. Stepping ashore he discovered a cornucopia of timber, tortoises, alligators and coconuts, and realised that he had definitely found Ile d'Abondance (Isle of Plenty).

Back in Mauritius, he showed the excited governor some calculations and diagrams he had made. La Bourdonnais was satisfied and filled with a burning curiosity, but strangely enough it did not induce him to visit this fascinating place personally. He must have been preoccupied with the ongoing war of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748) that was then raging in Europe and which was threatening to have dire repercussions in India, where English and French interests clashed. La Bourdonnais decided to send Lazare Picault back to Ile d'Abondance for a more elaborate survey and exploration.

So, on 30 May 1746, Picault found himself back on the uninhabited island. After many days spent exploring the wooded hills he loaded his ship with coconuts and tortoises and sailed back to Mauritius, a happy man with a mission accomplished. This time he decided to make a major modification in his report. He renamed the island 'Mahé' in honour of his farsighted and astute governor who was by then 45 years old, a year older than himself.

In July 1746, upon learning that the French colonial administration in India was facing serious aggression from British forces, La Bourdonnais left Mauritius and went to India with a strong squadron, to seize naval supremacy from the English which enabled them in September to capture the capital city and principal port of Madras.

During this time Mahé, and the rest of the Labourdonnais islands remained uninhabited and virtually unknown, save as a resting place for Arab sailors who often came ashore to replenish their dhows.

In 1748 Lazare Picault died, and in 1753 Labourdonnais died.

In July 1756, as Robert Clive's supreme victory at Calcutta left no doubt that the British would eventually gain entire control over India, the new governor of Mauritius, Rene Magon de la Villebague was justifiably concerned about British expansion in the Indian Ocean. He felt that he was duty bound to protect French interests at all costs. Having spent many hours studying Picault's maps and documents, he summoned his most experienced and trustworthy mariner, Corneil Nicolas Morphey, and entrusted him with a most patriotic venture ... and a most precious object. Morphey, who was mourning the loss of his wife who had died in May, felt that he needed the adventure to alleviate his grief. He rejoiced at the proposition.

He left Mauritius on Friday 16 July 1756 and arrived at Mahé on Monday 6 September, bringing the 'Pierre de Possession' (Stone of Possession).

On 1 November, all Saints Day, he claimed the island of Mahé and the rest of the Seychelles archipelago for Louis XV. He named Seychelles in honour of Jean Baptiste Morreau de Sechelles who had then just retired as financial controller of the Empire. In fact Sechelles was the name of a feudal estate in the north of France of which Jean Baptiste Morreau had been the seigneurie in 1715. The process verbal was signed by Morphey himself and five of his accompanying officers. Morphey also visited Cerf Island which lies three miles east of Mahé. He named it after his ship.

The site where the Stone of Possession was placed and the royal flag raised, was the same site where years later – on 17 May 1794 – the intricate proceedings of the first capitulation of the Seychelles to the British were carried out. It was also the same place where on Sunday



morning of 1 August 1791 the tricolor French Flag was first raised. Similar ceremonies must have taken place in other French colonies, pertaining to the French revolution.

The Stone of Possession measures precisely 30.5 by 30.5 centimetres and it is a block of limestone coral. It was engraved with the arms of France which comprised three fleurs de lys (lily flowers) topped with the Royal crown and surrounded by the cordon of the Holy Spirit. Above were the letters I.D.E (Ile de-Ile of) and below was the name of Seychelles. Sadly, this exquisite design is no longer visible. The royal armorial bearings have been defaced, mutilated and desecrated, leaving only the letters I.DE. SECHELLES intact. The anathema, it seems must have been the reference to French monarchy though, Ironically, it was an English King who placed the noble Fleur de lys on the insignia of the French Royal family in 1337. The stone itself 'disappeared' for a time until rediscovered by a French General, Henri Nicolas

Frey, who arrived in Seychelles in September 1894 on SS Australian en route to Marseille from New Caledonia. During his sojourn, the general stayed at the then newly-opened Hotel Equator which was owned by a Swiss, Jean Schultess. One morning, while strolling in the garden of the hotel, the general noticed a peculiar masonry block lying among the weeds and flower beds. As he examined the defaced engravings he became curious and sought enlightenment from his host.

As Schultess recounted the exploits of Picault and the eventual arrival of Morpheu to Seychelles with the stone aboard the Cerf, the General became fascinated... and appalled. The oldest historical object...the supreme symbol of erstwhile French sovereignty of the Seychelles islands ... THE STONE OF POSSESSION was lying neglected in the yard of a hotel!

Frey was overcome by the impulse to salvage the precious stone at all costs and he hatched a plan to take it away to France and hand it over to the Paris Museum.

Schultess must have agreed with his proposal because he personally assisted with the stone's removal and packing. This was not done surreptitiously or clandestinely. The few compatriots of the hotel owner who witnessed the proceedings watched with detachment, unaware of the significance of the act.

On 15 September the SS Australian sailed away from Mahé with the Stone of Possession aboard, along with the exuberant general anticipating the thrill of presenting it to the curator of the Paris Museum.

But somebody sounded the alarm – albeit belatedly. The administrator, Thomas Risely Griffith was outraged. The stone was the property of the Empire! It was situated on Crown land! The administrator summoned Schultess unleashed his fury on him, citing the offence under the penal code 6 of 1838.

Realising the grave consequence of his actions Schultess justified his offence by arguing defensively that the stone had been lying on HIS land and was therefore his rightful property to dispose of as he wished.

Griffith assigned the Government Surveyor, Sebert Baty, to draw up a plan of the grounds of the Equator Hotel to ascertain if the Stone of Possession had been lying on the Swiss man's property. Eventually, it was determined that the stone had been lying on the boundary line... therefore on Crown land! Schultess was in trouble.

The infuriated administrator issued an ultimatum: The stone was to be returned to the colony, otherwise, Schultess would face imprisonment. The Swiss Hotel owner dispatched a cable to Frey, in Aden. Fortunately for him, a communications link had been established just the previous year.

When SS Australian arrived at Aden, the stone was unloaded and placed aboard another steamer that was on its way to Seychelles. One can almost empathise with the General's disappointment as he parted with his most precious cargo.

On 16 November the Stone of Possession arrived aboard SS Polynesia having been out

of Seychelles for precisely 61 days.

It was taken and placed in the garden of the old government house. In 1911, when the new government house was built, the Stone of Possession was transferred there and for over half a century it was an object of curiosity among the resplendent surroundings of the landscaped garden and shrubberies. It must have puzzled many visitors to the Governor's home.

In 1965, it was removed and placed in the National History Museum. Yes, it is the oldest and smallest monument in the Seychelles archipelago and the islands might have lost it forever if it were not for a strait-laced British Colonial administrator. But then again, in 1894, few inhabitants were aware that it was missing.



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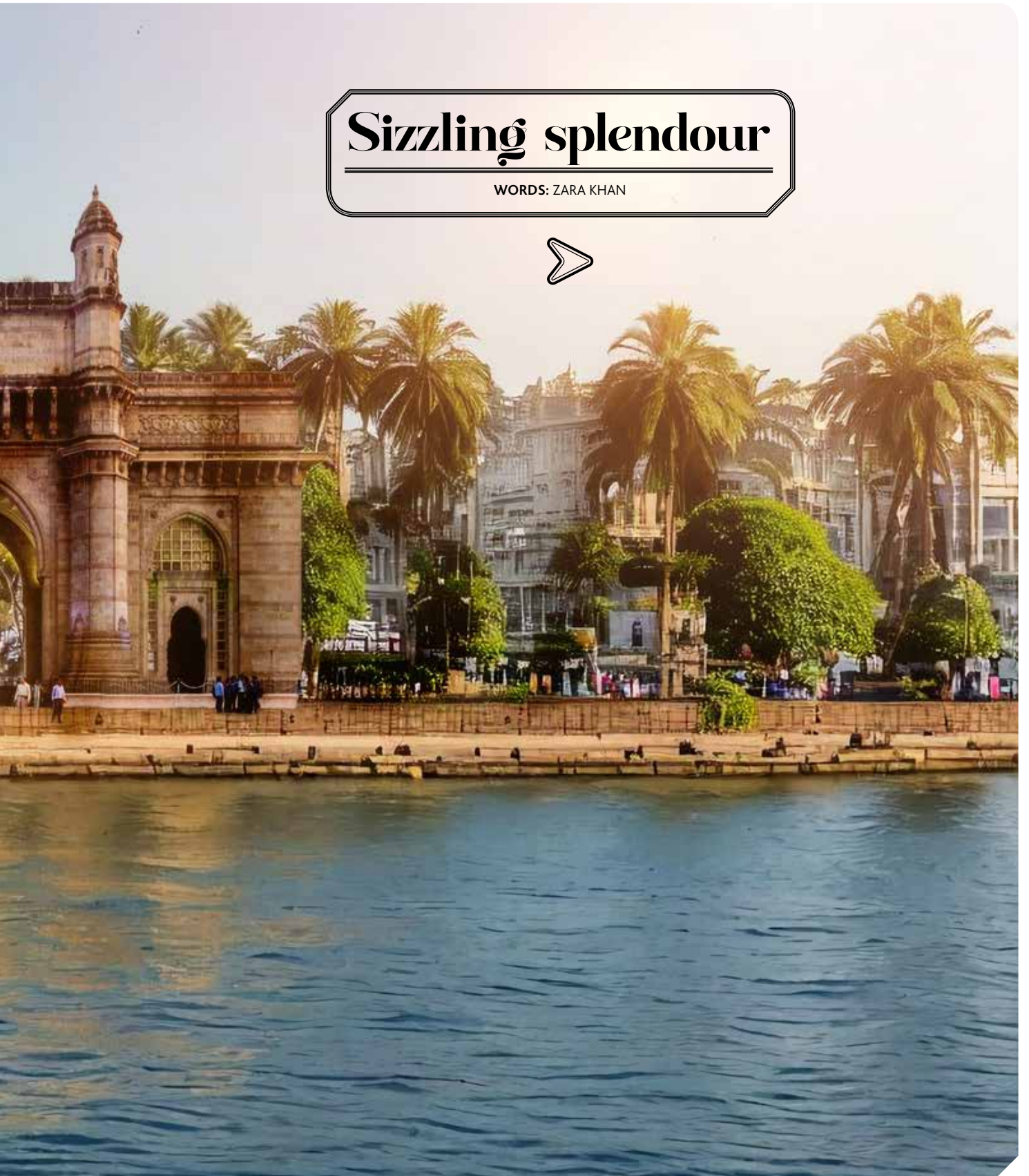




Gateway to India

Sizzling splendour

WORDS: ZARA KHAN





Bollywood glamour

During the hot summer months, Mumbai, India's busy metropolis on the West Coast, comes to life with a distinct energy. As the temperature rises, the city's vibrant energy, rich culture, and tenacious character shine through. Let us explore the spirit of summer in Mumbai, looking at how this coastal city welcomes the heat with a mix of history, innovation, and a splash of Bollywood glamour.

At night, Marine Drive becomes a stunning sight with its necklace-like glow of streetlights that illuminate the promenade. Mumbai's skyline, with its towering towers and glistening lights, contributes to the wonderful mood. In addition to its natural beauty and recreational opportunities, Marine Drive is historically significant. It was constructed on reclaimed ground in the early twentieth century and had an important part in defining Mumbai's growth and development.

The perfect environment of Marine Drive attracts not only admirers but also a large number of people who come here for the lively atmosphere. Surrounded by dining enterprises serving local and foreign cuisines, this location guarantees an interesting gastronomic experience with an ocean view that relaxes the mind and soul. One can indulge in numerous activities such as enjoying savoury street food or sipping sparkling coconut water or chai while admiring spectacular scenery. Marine Drive is a foodie's heaven, thanks to the bustling ambience and the smells of exquisite meals. A number of activities and cultural festivals take place along Marine Drive to highlight the city's booming arts and culture sector.



Street food

Marine Drive holds a particular place in the hearts of Mumbai people, as it embodies the city's tenacity and energy. People congregate there to unwind, make memories, and simply relax. Marine Drive provides a respite away from the hustle and bustle of daily life, whether for a leisurely evening stroll, a romantic date, or simply some peaceful time.

There is a lot to see and do surrounding the Marine Drive; the Gateway of India, a renowned Mumbai landmark, is around 4 kilometres north of Marine Drive. The distinguished arch monument stands tall as a symbol of history and offers unparalleled views of the majestic Arabian Sea; The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (previously known as Victoria Terminus) is a remarkable representation of the Victorian Gothic style located approximately 4 kilometres north of Marine Drive. UNESCO has designated this train station as a World Heritage Site for its architectural and cultural significance, while the Colaba Causeway is a popular street market known for its diverse businesses and vibrant atmosphere.

The street food scene in Mumbai is legendary, and summer is the ideal season to indulge in these culinary delicacies. From the renowned Vada Pav to the cool Gola (shaved ice sweets), the city's numerous street vendors provide a culinary feast. Colaba Causeway, Juhu Beach, and Mohammed Ali Road become lively foodie hotspots, where locals and tourists enjoy the different flavours of Mumbai's culinary scene.

Best street food spots in Mumbai

1. **Mohammad Ali Road:** It is famous for its delectable kebabs, biryanis, and desserts.
2. **Juhu Beach** has many street food shops providing vada pav, pav bhaji, and other munchies.
3. **Crawford Market:** A prominent market in South Mumbai for the best street food, offering a variety of street food alternatives such as chaat, sandwiches, and sweets.
4. **Girgaum Chowpatty** is a popular area for both locals and tourists to enjoy street cuisine, including bhel puri, pani puri, and chaat.
5. **Khau Galli** in Vile Parle serves both vegetarian and non-vegetarian street food.
6. **Carter Road:** A prominent coastal promenade in Western Mumbai, Carter Road offers a plethora of street food booths serving a variety of snacks and fast cuisine.
7. **Colaba Causeway,** a lively boulevard in South Mumbai, offers a range of street food alternatives, including Chinese and chaat.
8. **Andheri West** is a popular area in Western Mumbai with excellent street cuisine alternatives, such as Chinese and chaat.
9. **Zaveri Bazaar** is a prominent market in South Mumbai that offers delicious vegetarian street cuisine, including chaat, sandwiches, and desserts.
10. **Fort:** A popular district in South Mumbai with many street food options like sandwiches and chaat.



Marine Drive



Sanjay Gandhi National Park

One of Mumbai's most celebrated festivals, Ganesh Chaturthi, often falls during the summer months. The city comes alive with elaborate decorations, processions, and cultural events as communities come together to welcome Lord Ganesha into their homes. The beats of traditional dhol and the aroma of modaks (sweet dumplings) permeate the air, creating an atmosphere of joy and unity.

For Hindus, Ganesh Chaturthi has enormous spiritual and cultural significance. Lord Ganesha, the son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati, is said to bestow intelligence, success, and good fortune upon his devotees. Devotees seek Lord Ganesha's blessings before beginning any work, exam, wedding, or new employment. It is celebrated with great enthusiasm across the country. People celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi by bringing Ganapati Bappa idols into their houses for one and a half days, three days, seven days, or ten days respectively. The event concludes with Ganesh Visarjan, in which devotees plunge Lord Ganesha's statues in water with heavy hearts, hoping that Bappa will return the next year. During Visarjan, large processions are held with people shouting 'Ganapati Bappa Morya, Purnima Varshi Laukariya'.

To escape the summer heat, Mumbaikars flock to various leisure spots across the city. Water parks like EsselWorld and Water Kingdom provide a refreshing retreat for families, while the lush greenery of the

Sanjay Gandhi National Park offers a serene escape from the urban hustle. In the evenings, the city's theatres and cinemas buzz with activity, offering a dose of Bollywood glamour to those seeking entertainment.

As the summer heat intensifies, Mumbaikars eagerly anticipate the arrival of the monsoon rains. The city's resilience is evident as it prepares for the annual deluge, with residents embracing the rain as a relief from the scorching temperatures. The transition from summer to monsoon becomes a poetic journey, marking a shift in the city's rhythm and a renewal of life.

Summer in Mumbai is not just a season; it's an experience that encapsulates the spirit of this vibrant city. From the iconic seafronts to the lively festivals, Mumbai's summer is a celebration of diversity, resilience, and the unyielding spirit of its people. As temperatures rise, so does the collective enthusiasm of Mumbaikars, creating a tapestry of experiences that make summer in Mumbai truly unforgettable.

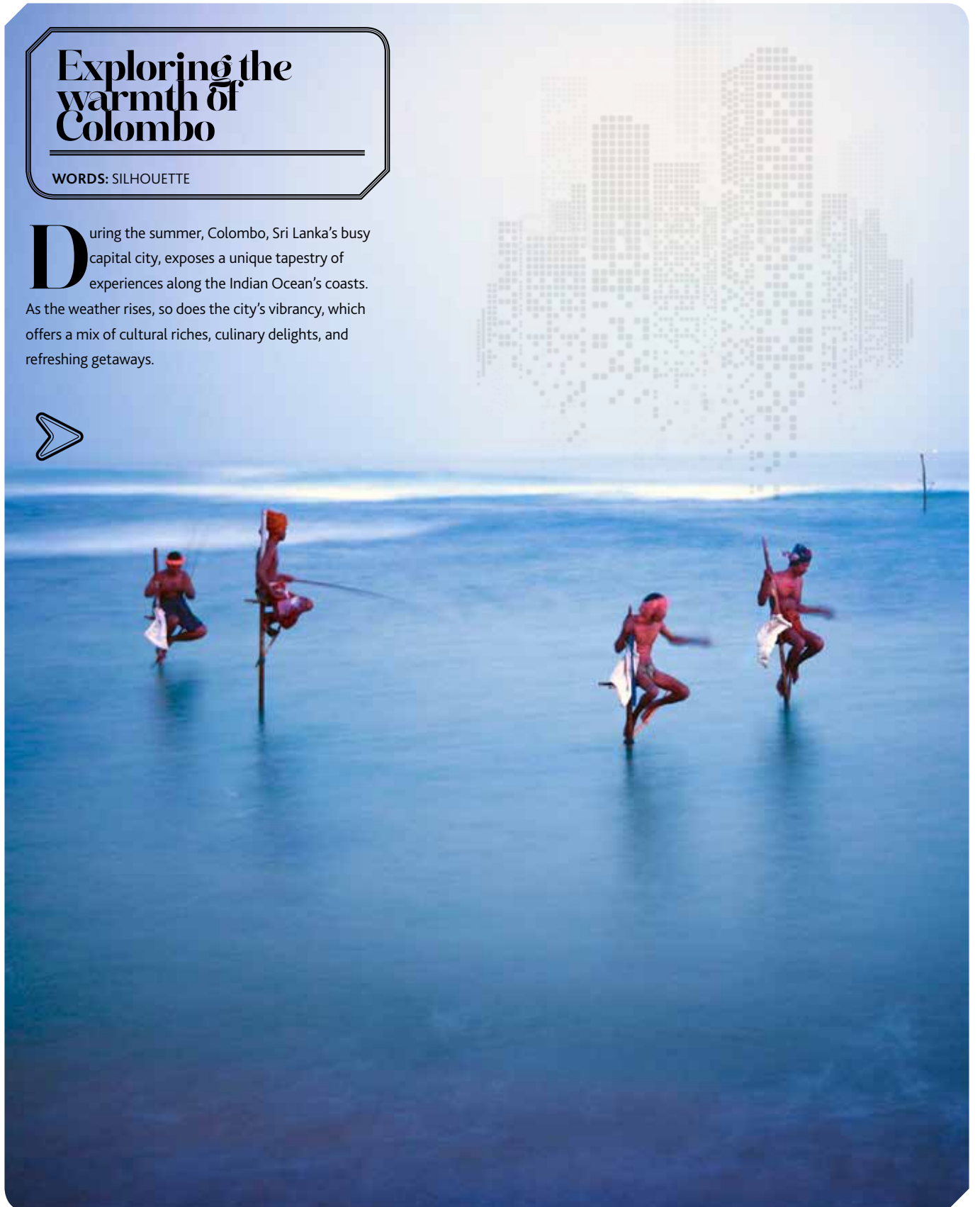


Flight information: www.airseychelles.com

Exploring the warmth of Colombo

WORDS: SILHOUETTE

During the summer, Colombo, Sri Lanka's busy capital city, exposes a unique tapestry of experiences along the Indian Ocean's coasts. As the weather rises, so does the city's vibrancy, which offers a mix of cultural riches, culinary delights, and refreshing getaways.



☉ Galle Face Green, a Coastal Bliss

The Galle Face Green, Colombo's greatest open area, is currently a 5-hectare ribbon strip of land between Galle Road and the Indian Ocean. Locals and visitors alike gather at Galle Face Green, a large coastal promenade, to enjoy the invigorating sea wind. Families enjoy picnics against the backdrop of the Indian Ocean, youngsters fly kites, and couples enjoy romantic sunset strolls. The seaside vendors selling local delicacies give a touch of culinary flair to this scenic environment, making Galle Face Green a must-see during the summer.

There are two large hotels in the area that surround the strip; the Ceylon Inter-Continental Hotel on one side and the tiny Galle Face Hotel on the other, with a range of old-world elegance featuring vintage furniture, hand-carved doors, balconies, and high ceilings.



☉ A Cultural Extravaganza

Summer in Colombo is filled with cultural festivals and events. Kandy Esala Perahera, commonly known as The Festival of the Tooth, a spectacular Buddhist parade involving ornately decked elephants, traditional dancers, and musicians, is held in the city. This historical procession is done each year to honour the Sacred Tooth Relic of Buddha, which is housed at the Sri Dalada Maligawa in Kandy. The celebration spills onto the streets of Colombo, creating a colourful scene in which both locals and tourists can immerse themselves in Sri Lanka's rich past. For the next five nights, the 'Devale Peraheras' are held within the premises of the four Devales, with the priest of each Devale taking the pole each evening, accompanied

by music and drumming, flag and canopy bearers, spearman, and the Ran Ayudha (gold Armaments), the sacred emblem of the Gods. The Kumbal Perahera starts on the sixth night and lasts five days. The Devale Peraheras first congregate in front of the Temple of the Tooth, Sri Lanka's most prominent Buddhist shrine and the location of the Buddha's Sacred Tooth Relic since the 16th century with the placement of insignias on the ransivige (a dome-like structure), escorted by the *Basnayake Nilames* (the Devales' lay custodians).

There are five processions in total, and the pageant concludes with the *Diya Kepeema*, a water-cutting ritual at the Mahaweli River at Getambe, a town located a few kilometres from Kandy.

📍 Escape to nature

In the middle of the city's bustle, Colombo offers lush havens that provide reprieve from the summer heat. With its rich foliage and brilliant flowers, Viharamahadevi Park becomes a retreat for people seeking peace and tranquillity. Viharamahadevi Park previously Victoria Park, is a public park located in Cinnamon Gardens, Colombo. It was constructed by the British colonial authority and is Colombo's oldest and largest park. On 18 July 1958, the park was renamed after Queen Viharamahadevi, the mother of King Dutugamunu, from the original name 'Victoria Park' after Queen Victoria. Following the war, the park was repaired and reopened to the public in 1951.

During World War II, it was captured by the British Army, with the Australian 17th Brigade stationed in Victoria Park. After the Viharamahadevi Park. The park has a large Buddha statue that replaced the original Queen Victoria statue, as well as a series of water fountains. It also has a mini-zoo, a children's play area, and a BAC Jet Provost. There are Muscovy ducks in the Park. They swim in the manmade lake and wander on the grass next to it.

Viharamahadevi Park, the only large-scale public park in Colombo, is managed by the Colombo Municipal Council. At its western end are the Cenotaph War Memorial, Colombo, and the Colombo Public Library. The Vihara Maha Devi Park Open Air Stadium hosts venues for concerts and public events.

Similarly, the Diyatha Uyana (Waters Edge) and Beddagana Park provide tranquil lakeside settings in which tourists can relax and connect with nature. The park was built on swampy territory along the banks of the Diyawanna Oya. It is located at the Polduwa crossroads, between the Parliament Complex and the Diyawanna Oya.



④ Floating restaurant

The Water's Edge floating restaurant first opened its doors in December 2014. The floating restaurant was built following a local plan as part of the Sri Lanka Navy's offshore patrol building project. This restaurant is now maintained by Water Sage Hotel Management. The restaurant can seat between 36 and 55 people. It is 16 metres (51 feet) in length and 9.4 metres (31 feet) in width. A Navy technical team was assigned to manage all mechanical difficulties with the hotel crew while serving with a chef. Night rides are also provided, allowing visitors to see the city at dusk. Individual functions can also be held in the floating restaurant.



④ Savouring the season

Summer brings Colombo's culinary scene to life, with street markets and food festivals highlighting the different flavours of Sri Lankan cuisine. From the aromatic spice markets of Pettah to the seafood pleasures of Galle Face, foodies may go on a culinary tour that represents the island's rich culinary past.

Colombian cuisine is a distinct fusion of indigenous and European traditions, with Afro-Caribbean influences. Prior to European conquest, the two main indigenous communities were the *Tairona*, who lived along the Caribbean Coast, and the *Muisca*, who dwelt in the highlands to the south. *Arepas*, which are produced from corn, are one of Colombia's oldest culinary

delicacies. The name is thought to be derived from the word for corn in the Chibcha language.

Colombian cuisine and ingredients vary greatly depending on the region. Cereals such as rice and maize; tubers such as potato and cassava; various legumes; meats such as cattle, chicken, hog, and goat; and fish and other seafood are among the most commonly used items. Colombian cuisine also includes a large range of tropical fruits, including *uchuva*, *feijoa*, *arazá*, *nispero*, *pitaya*, *cherimoya*, *mamoncillo*, *guanabana*, pineapple, *mangostino*, *maracuya*, *zapote*, *granadilla*, papaya, guava, *mora* (blackberry), and *lulo*, among others.

Patacones (fried green plantains), *sancocho de gallina* (chicken soup with root vegetables), *ajiaco* (potato and corn soup) and *buuelos* (Christmas season deep fried dough balls) are among the most popular appetisers and soups. *Pandebono*, *arepas* (corn cakes), *aborrajados* (fried sweet plantains with cheese), *torta de choclo*, *empanadas*, *almojábanas* and *mogollas* are typical snacks and breads. Popular main courses include *bandeja paisa*, *lechona tolimense*, tamales, and fish dishes like *arroz de lisa*. Coastal regions also enjoy *suero*, *costeño* cheese, *kibbeh*, and *carimañolas*.

Popular side dishes include *papas criollas al horno* (roasted Andean potatoes), *papas chorreadas* (potatoes with gooey cheese), and *arroz con coco* (coconut rice). Organic cuisine is a popular trend in major cities, but the country's fruits and vegetables are often quite natural and fresh.

Representative desserts are *natillas*, *torta María Luisa*, *bocadillo* made of *guayaba* (guava jelly), *cocadas* (coconut balls), *casquitos de guayaba* (candied guava peels), *torta de natas*, *obleas*, *flan de arequipe*, *roscón*, *milhoja*, *brevas* (preserved in syrup) *con arequipe*, and *tres leches* cake (sponge cake soaked in 3 types of milk).

🕒 Exploring heritage sites

In the summer light, the ancient charm of Colombo's colonial architecture comes to life. Iconic landmarks such as the Old Parliament Building, the Dutch Hospital, and the Independence Memorial Hall provide insight into the city's colonial history. Walking around these heritage sites in the fresh summer air offers a unique combination of history and atmosphere.

The two World Trade Centre towers were among the most identifiable characteristics of the city. Prior to its construction in 1997, the neighbouring Bank of Ceylon tower was the tallest skyscraper and most prominent city landmark. Before the erection of skyscrapers, the tallest structure was the Old Parliament Building in the Fort district, with the Old Colombo Lighthouse adjacent. Another important feature is St. Paul's Church Milagiriya, one of Sri Lanka's oldest churches, first erected by the Portuguese and rebuilt by the British in 1848.

Cannons once positioned on the rampart of Colombo's historic fort were laid out for observance and grandeur at the Green. The Galle Face Hotel, renowned as Asia's Emerald on the Green since 1864, is located next to Galle Face Green. The hotel has hosted the British Royal Family, as well as other royals and celebrities. After staying at the hotel, Princess Alexandra of Denmark said, 'The peacefulness and generosity encountered at the Galle Face Hotel cannot be matched'.



🌃 Colombo After Dark

Colombo evolves into a metropolis that never sleeps when the sun sets. The beachfront restaurants, pubs, and clubs come alive with a mix of local and international talent. Colombo's nightlife during the summer is an active and vibrant event, whether you're having a seafood supper with the sound of crashing surf or dancing to the beats of Sri Lankan music.

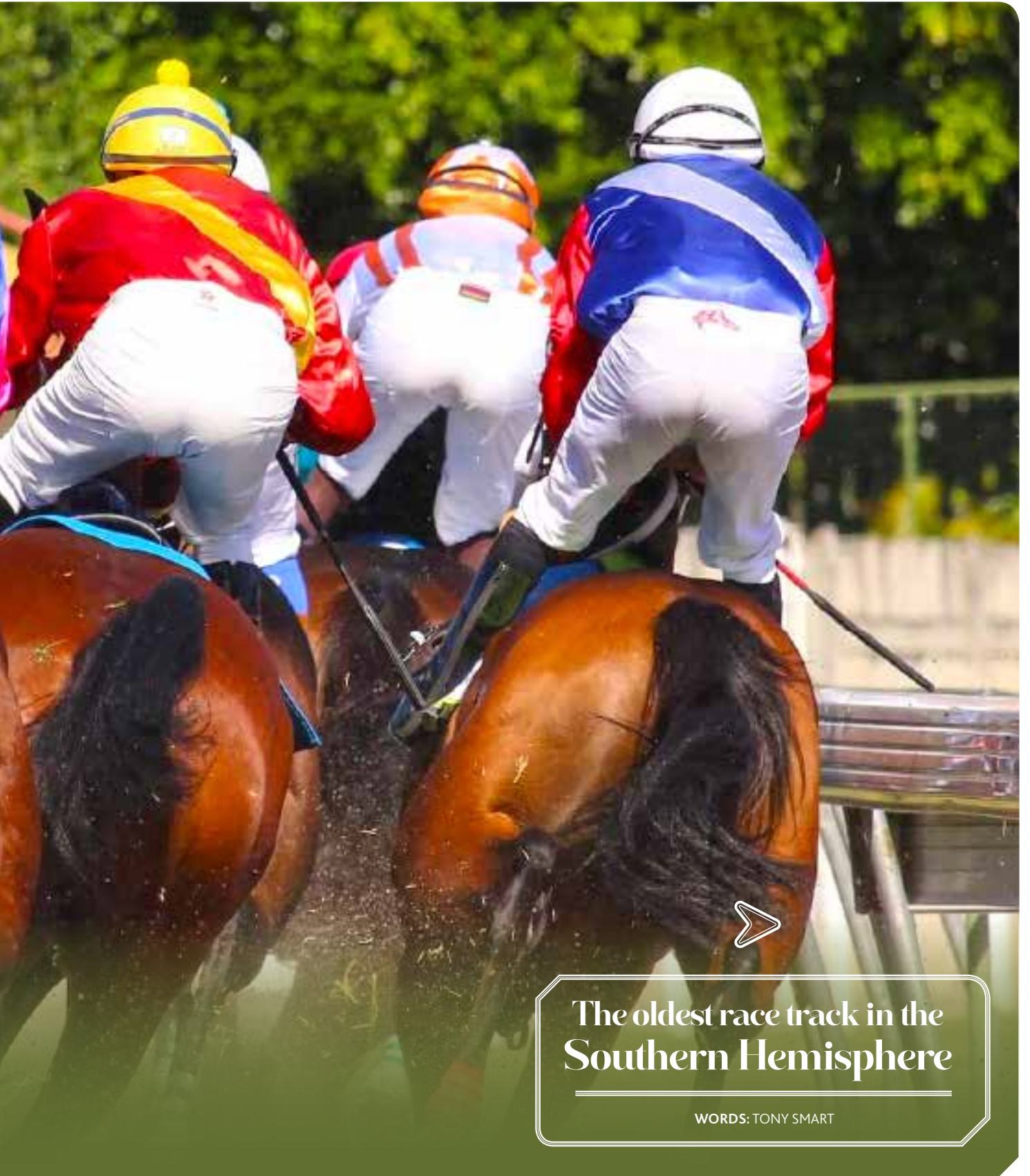
Summer in Colombo is a celebration of life, culture, and the seaside beauty that characterises this intriguing city. Colombo is a sensory feast that makes an indelible imprint on those who embrace its warmth, from the sun-drenched promenades to the cultural festivals and culinary delights. As the weather warms, so does the charm of Colombo, enticing everyone to immerse themselves in the fascinating spirit of this coastal gem.



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The oldest race track in the Southern Hemisphere

WORDS: TONY SMART



Every Saturday during racing season, April-December attracts tens of thousands of people converge on the Champ de Mars race track in Port Louis to cheer on the jockeys and horses, urging their favourite to victory. It has become the ultimate meeting place for racing fanatics from all over the island and even from abroad. Thousands more do the same thing from home, watching the races on television.

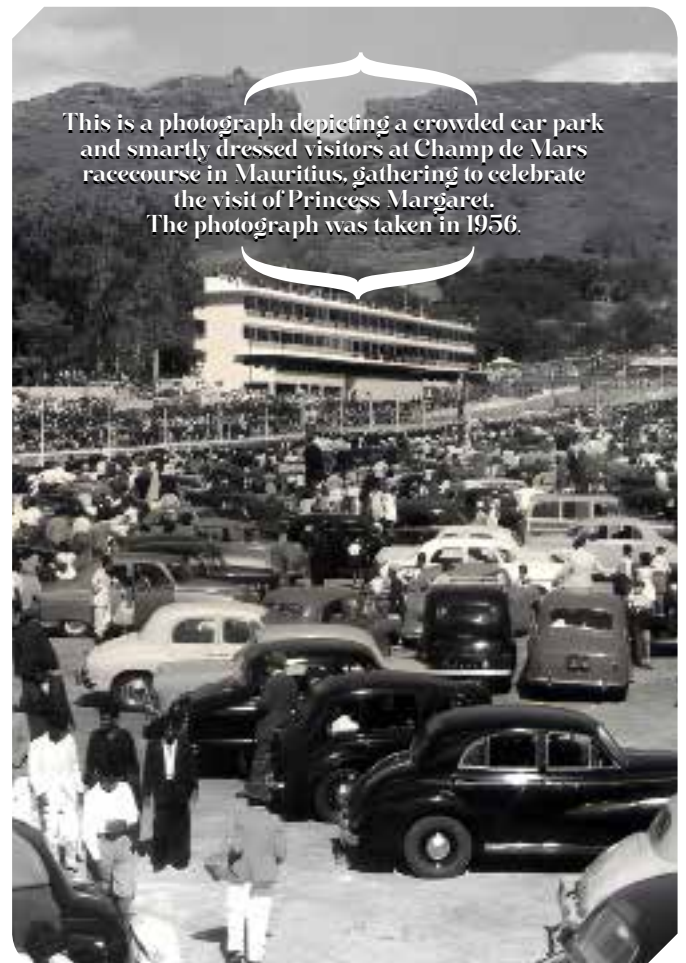
Even if you don't like horse racing, a visit to Champ de Mars is a worthwhile experience. It is the island's only horse racing track, the oldest in the Southern Hemisphere, and one of the oldest in the world.

The race track, previously a military training area was built in 1812, the same year as the Mauritius Turf Club, which runs the race meets. The track is named after the Champ de Mars in Paris, near the Eiffel Tower, which was previously an old military training camp before becoming a racecourse.

Champ de Mars, located on the eastern end of Port Louis, is situated

in the huge natural amphitheatre of the surrounding lush green hills, which include the popular mountain hiking site, Le Pouce. The inside of the race track is divided into two sections: a parking lot and a spectator area (with free admission). It also has a bookie village where punters can place all kinds of bets, as well as a range of fast food kiosks where fans can get local goodies like samosas, baton fromages, fried chicken, sandwiches, fresh fruit juice, ice cream, the famed Phoenix beer, and soft beverages like coca-cola and sprite.

It's a constantly hustling and the bustling atmosphere as gamblers seek last-minute information on their cell phones, many of which appear to be permanently attached to their ears, rush to place bets before the race begins, gather eagerly by the finishing straight to cheer on their horse, and then gather around the fast food stands to get a beer and some samosas before the cycle repeats itself for the next race.



This is a photograph depicting a crowded car park and smartly dressed visitors at Champ de Mars racecourse in Mauritius, gathering to celebrate the visit of Princess Margaret. The photograph was taken in 1956.



Some are devastated by their loss, while others are overjoyed to have won. Many simply stand around and talk. From my visit, it appeared that Champs de Mars is a location where you can meet old friends, make new ones, and generally have a good time socialising, wagering, and rooting for your horse to win.

The atmosphere is charged, with hundreds of thousands of Mauritian rupees depending on the outcome. For those who are unable to witness the race due to congestion at the fence, there is one large TV screen and several smaller ones broadcasting live action.

Outside the track, at the northern end of Champs de Mars, where the majority of the off-track action occurs. The paddock is where all of the horses parade before and after their races. According to one expert I spoke with, this is the best spot to be since you can tell a lot about a horse's performance just on how it acts when the

rider mounts it. If there is instant synergy between jockey and horse, the horse stands a strong chance of winning. If it starts acting up as soon as its rider steps on, forget it.

The jockeys, dressed in bright, kaleidoscopic shirts with multiple combinations of red and yellow hoops, blue and white squares, black and orange diamonds, green and black stripes, crosses, circles, dots, and diagonals, canter around the small grass square, led by their owners and trainers. Crowds who do not have the necessary credentials to enter the paddock area cling to the surrounding wire fences, craning their necks to catch a sight of their favourites and the all-important moment when the jockey mounts the horse.

Surrounding the paddock is an area identical to that seen in the middle of the track, where ordinary spectators mingle amidst the abundance of bookies, quick food stands and overhead TVs. Again, friends meet, race information is passed, and people eagerly perused





the most recent form guides, racing magazines, and newspapers for news on horses named Desert Storm, Cactus Wolf, Rambo Rouge, Sugar King, and Wings of Simon. Mauritius may have only one racecourse, but it boasts a large number of racehorses, jockey stables and racing media, and many Mauritians consider horseracing to be their national hobby.

Under the grandstands are the member's private boxes, from which they and their friends and family can watch the race in comfort while being served continuous refreshments; the broadcasting room, where various TV pundits make their commentaries; the Stewards Room, where all race infringements, such as cutting in front of another horse, are

rigorously investigated; and the jockeys' changing rooms.

The season spans from the end of March until the first weekend in December, which is traditionally International Jockeys Weekend, when some of the top jockeys from around the world compete at Champ de Mars. Frankie Dettori, Johnnie Murtag, Willie Carson, and Walter Swinburn have visited the island before.

Champ de Mars competitions are all flat, with no jumps like the famous Grand National in England, and there are four classic and six semi-classic races, which run each year. The maiden cup is the largest, followed by the gold cup. The first classic race of the season, the Duchess of York Cup, is held on the opening day of racing.





As each race approaches, the starting gates are wheeled out by tractor, the horses are ridden up and down the finishing straight for a few moments so that all of the crowd can see them, and then roughly 20 red-hatted, black-shirted staff begin herding the horses into the starting gates.

This is not always a simple task because many horses are hesitant to enter the restricted space, even for a few seconds, and it can be deadly if some horses kick out in terror. A direct blow from one of those indestructible hooves can lead to a serious bruising, even a shattered bone.

The track is oval-shaped, and most races last one circle, culminating in a hard uphill straight directly in front of the grandstands, where you can see the horses visibly tired

as their jockeys push them to the finish line. It's hard work, and my heart goes out to the horses.

A visit to the Champ de Mars is an exhilarating day out, and the growing crescendo of noise as the horses near the finish line, with thousands of spectators jumping up and down screaming as loudly as they can, is quite something. If you're in Mauritius and you've never been, then for just Mauritian Rupee 200 admittance to the grandstands, it's definitely worth a visit even if, like me, you have no interest in horse racing. Champ de Mars and horse racing are integral parts of Mauritian culture, and spending a day there will undoubtedly help tourists better appreciate these great people. Furthermore, it is a fantastic day out for the entire family.

Visiting Champs de Mars

The Mauritius Turf Club has worked hard over the years to transform this horse racing arena into a well-known world-class racing venue. There are four cup races staged on the Champ de Mars:

- Barbe Cup
- Duchess of York Cup
- Duke of York Cup
- Maiden Cup

Newly imported horses from South Africa, the United Kingdom, Australia, and France are limited to special races. On racing days, the atmosphere in the arena is electrifying, attracting a large number of people who want to share this thrilling event.

The race normally begins after 12 p.m., and upon arriving, attendees are greeted with welcome beverages and led to the VIP boxes. It is followed by a brief introduction to horse racing and the services that will be available during the day.

Guests can watch a total of eight races every day, and a common bet is organised after the second race, giving them the possibility to win a jackpot. Food and beverages are available for free for the VIPs on request between 12 and 5 p.m.

Throughout the day, horse racing professionals will advise you on how to place your bet. Guests can also meet local horse owners, trainers, and riders. The VIP box offers a spectacular view of the racecourse and finish line. The television displays all of the race's statistics and betting details.



Flight information: www.airseychelles.com

Banana Reef

where solitude
is sublime

WORDS: PETER HOLTHUSEN





There could scarcely be a corner of the world further removed in both distance and spirit from every day than the remote islands of the Maldives archipelago. From the sky, they appear little more than scattered pearls on the vast Indian Ocean. As you draw closer 1,100 coral islands and pristine atolls come into view, whose ivory-white, palm-fringed beaches slowly reveal the lowest-lying island nation in the world.

For the discerning traveller, the Maldives is both a beautiful and rewarding holiday destination, and especially if you are a diver, for amongst this scattering of islands you will find some of the best dive sites in the world, literally teeming with underwater life and vibrant coral gardens, with excellent visibility.

These idyllic islands take refined relaxation in a pristine environment to a new dimension. Very few places in the world even come close to replicating the breathtaking attributes and natural beauty of the Maldives. In the heart of this unspoilt Eden, inside Kuda Kalhi, lies the lush and verdant atoll of Banana Reef, a protected marine area that owes its name to its curved shape.

A renowned North Malé hotspot and the best diving site in all the archipelago, Banana Reef lies about 25 kilometres from the capital city of Malé, little more than 15 minutes away from the artificial island of Hulhumalé, and a 25-minute boat ride from Velana International Airport.

Also known as 'Gaathugiri', this spectacular reef is a veritable gallery of ornate underwater caves,



precipitous overhanging cliffs, soft corals, and dramatic marine life, sheltering barracudas, snappers, sea turtles, Napoleon wrasse, puffer fish, manta rays, moray eels, brightly coloured triggerfish, and other pelagic species that utilise the surrounding reef for feeding, cleaning, and mating.

Banana Reef crept into travellers' bucket lists when it was discovered to be Maldives first world-class diving spot, and continues to do so, for no matter how many other dive sites are discovered in the archipelago, this one has always remained the most popular.

The reef stretches over a length of around 300 metres, from the North-East to South, and lies near the popular island resorts such as Club Med Kani, Kurumba and the Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa on Furanafushi Island. The reef has two main dive sites, the North Point and the South Point. The North Point is shallower than the South Point and is ideal for beginners. The much deeper South Point has more advanced diving conditions.



There are many places along the dive site to investigate, for example, on the western end of the reef where an extensive buckle can be found between 1 metre to 15 metres down that support a wide variety of fish and other marine life. The northeastern end of the reef is reputedly the best place to dive with a lot of huge caverns, interesting shades of coral and deep fissures to explore.

As soon as you lower your head into this deep blue underworld, you will be greeted by prolific and vivaciously coloured coral beds. Here, you will find fan-shaped boulders and an array of rare and beautiful sea anemones decorating the rocks on the seabed. These ornately coloured sea anemones are named after the equally beautiful terrestrial anemone flower. A close relative of coral and jellyfish, anemones are stinging polyps that spend most of their time attached to rocks on the seabed or on coral reefs waiting for fish to pass close enough to get ensnared in their venom-filled tentacles swaying in the current. The colours are in mesmerising shades of purple, lilac, violet, deep maroon,



The grouper fish, another beauty you will find here, and the Maldives has around 40-45 species of them, can usually be found in the caves and deep corals and will be accompanied by wrasse and other different kinds of fusilier, which include the blue dash and its striped cousin.

One of the prime big game fish to see and catch in the Maldives is the giant trevally, a very large and powerful predatory fish which usually occurs singly and inhabits clear lagoons and seaward reefs and they can quite often be seen patrolling the caverns and deep fissures at the northeastern end of Banana Reef in search of prey. However, the archipelago's spectacular reef system is one of the few places in the world where schools of giant trevally in the 30-80 lbs range can be commonly found year-round.

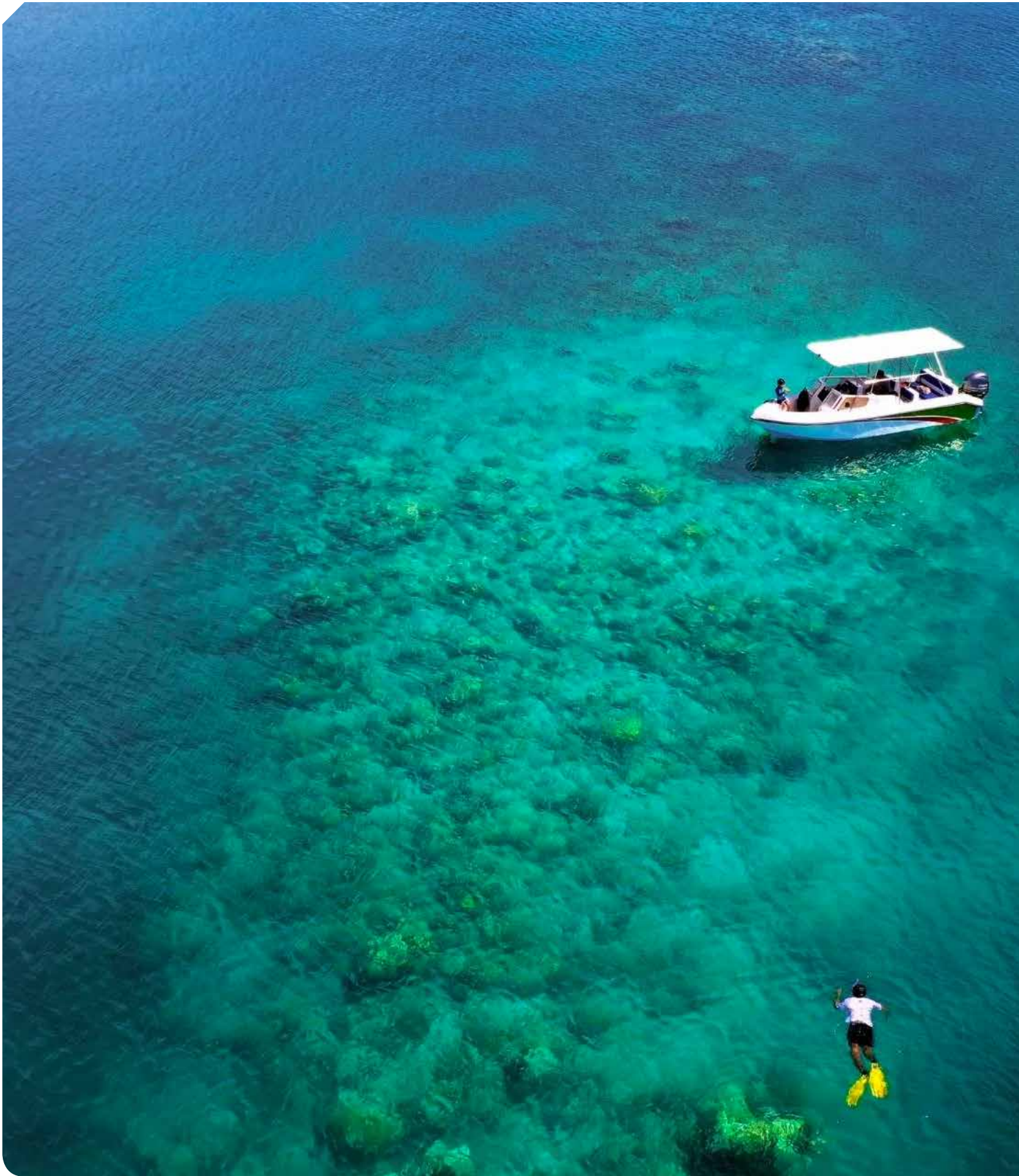
No less than five of the seven species of sea turtle in the world can be found in the Maldives, and there are two species that are seen far more frequently than the others at Banana Reef – the green sea turtle and the hawksbill turtle, but

flaming orange, indigo, sky blue, rust and bright yellow.


The coral growths are mainly soft corals, anemones and gorgonians and these invite a plethora of exotic and exquisitely beautiful fish. While the anemone gardens themselves are home to thousands of tiny anemone fish, you will also find the emperor angelfish, bluefin trevally, ribbon eels, Maldivian lobster, the puffers and the aptly named unicorn fish. You can also expect to see lionfish, mahi-mahi or common dolphinfish, venomous lionfish, wahoo, barracudas and groupers.

A diving experience like no other are the large schools of bannerfish that swim close by you in their thousands or even more at a time, inspecting you as they pass. These beautiful bannerfish, also known as the false Moorish idol, have vertical black and white striped patterns on their bodies along with long, dorsal fins. The mass of these schooling fish together is often so overpowering that you will feel the current of the water move as they do!





IMAGES COURTESY OF WIKIMEDIA.COM + UNSPLASH.COM + FLICKR.COM



if you're lucky enough you will also come across the little olive ridley sea turtle, which are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world, the loggerhead and the critically-endangered leatherback, which is the largest of all living turtles and the heaviest non-crocodilian reptile, reaching lengths of up to 2.7 metres (8 ft 10 in) and weights of around 500 kilogrammes (1,100 lb).

Don't forget the black snapper, giant squirrelfish, oriental sweetlips, soldierfish, daisy parrotfish, spotted eagle ray, trumpetfish, and many other mesmerizingly beautiful yet strongly fierce fish that call this reef their home.

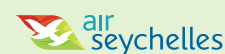
It is advisable to get to Banana Reef early in the morning, by around 9:00 am so that you are not bothered by the troublesome heat. Visitors can snorkel or dive to see the reef's rich marine life and its colourful inhabitants. The diving session is about 30 minutes long and should take about 3-4 hours to complete the whole activity, including travel times. There are also many fish feeding stations where you can watch, touch and occasionally hand-feed fish such as stingrays and baby sharks, although the latter activity is now justifiably frowned upon by the Ministry of Tourism which has taken a strong stance against shark feeding due to the surge in shark-related incidents and is now deemed illegal.

The months of November to April are the best time to visit Banana Reef as it's the height of the summer season there. Not only does the water stay clearer and the visibility is far better, but the Maldives' shark season falls during this period and many rare-seen leviathans of the deep return to the reef in abundance at this time, including the slow-moving whale shark.

Diving excursions, swimming tours, night dives and guided snorkelling trips are the best ways to see the whale sharks, which are the largest known extant fish species in the world. Larger whales are not especially common in the archipelago, but blue whales are seen regularly near Banana Reef as they migrate through the Maldives during November to May. In contrast, other large cetaceans such as the magnificent humpback and sperm whale are most commonly observed during the later months of June to October. Small wonder, the Maldives is considered to be one of the best destinations in the world for whale watching.

Since Malé is very well connected to Velana International Airport, there should be no problem reaching the capital. From there, a lot of public ferries, speed boat transfers or the much slower Dhoni (traditional sailing vessels) offer regular transfers to Banana Reef. If you want some privacy, you can opt for a private ferry, luxury yacht or even a seaplane charter.

Banana Reef is an amazing destination for those seeking a luxurious and memorable vacation in the Maldives. It boasts stunning scenery, fine dining options, world-class resorts with overwater villas, and plenty of activities to keep you entertained throughout your stay. Whether it's lazing on the beach, kayaking, surfing, fishing, bird watching or exploring the many underwater adventures that await you beneath the waves, this slice of paradise has something for everyone!



Flight information: www.airseychelles.com



Ideal time to explore

WORDS: TED ROGERS

Foliage may not be as lush as in the summer. Nonetheless, Johannesburg's parks and green spaces have a consistent amount of greenery throughout the year.

Snow falls in Johannesburg once every five years on average, with heavier snow occurring once every 10 to 20 years. The last time it snowed heavily was in July 2023.

While outdoor activities remain fun, lower conditions may make inside attractions more tempting. During the winter months, Johannesburg has a range of museums, galleries, shopping malls, and cultural events to enjoy. It is an excellent season for game viewing in local nature reserves. The dry season decreases foliage, making it easier to observe animals, and the colder temperatures are ideal for outdoor safaris.



Indoor and outdoor activities to explore in winter in Johannesburg:

🕒 The Apartheid Museum

Location: Northern Parkway and Gold Reef Road

The museum opened in 2001 and is the first of its kind and illustrates the rise and fall of apartheid. It is a superb example of design, space and landscape offering the international community a unique South African experience.

The exhibits include provocative film footage, photographs, text panels and artefacts illustrating the events and human stories that are part of the horrific period in South Africa's history.



🕒 Johannesburg Art Gallery

Location: Joubert Park, City Centre

It is the largest gallery on the continent and was completed in 1915 and consists of 15 exhibition halls and sculpture gardens. It houses collections of 17th-century Dutch paintings, 18th- and 19th-century British and European art, 19th-century South African works, a large contemporary collection of 20th-century local and international art, and a print cabinet containing works from the 15th century to the present.



🕒 The Origins Centre

Location: Yale Road &, 1 Enoch Sontonga Ave, Braamfontein

The museum explores the earliest art forms and cultures of southern Africa; and celebrates the South African people. The Origins Centre displays an extensive collection of rock art from the Rock Art Research Institute (RARI) at Wits, affording visitors the opportunity to view some of the richest visual heritage found in South Africa and to learn about the culture and history of inhabitants of South Africa.



🕒 Constitution Hill

Location: 11 Kotze Street in Braamfontein

Take a trip to the Constitution Hill, a living museum where the history of South Africa's struggle for democracy is showcased. It is a living museum that tells the story of South Africa's journey to democracy. The site is a former prison and military fort that bears testament to South Africa's turbulent past and, today, is home to the country's Constitutional Court, which endorses the rights of all citizens.

📍 Maboneng Precinct

Location: Fox St &, Kruger St, City and Suburban

It is on the east side of Johannesburg's inner city. Maboneng is a Sesotho word that means 'place of light'. A trip to the Maboneng Precinct is an absolute must. It's a fantastic example of how the development of an integrated, mixed-use community, where people play, live and work, can define a modernised urban way of life. Maboneng is a unique mix of developments that form a part of the city's exciting regeneration. These include studios, art galleries, boutique shops, restaurants and coffee bars that are fuelling an inner-city lifestyle with entrepreneurship and creativity.



Spend time shopping at popular malls and experience the most exclusive retail and leisure experience in Africa, and they have established themselves as leaders in innovation, fashion, and entertainment.

📍 Sandton City

Location: Sandton, Johannesburg

Sandton City is Africa's most iconic shopping centre defining the Sandton skyline is home to over 373 of the world's most coveted retail brands, and embodies all the glamour of world-class shopping, dining, and leisure.



📍 Rosebank Mall

Location: 50 Bath Avenue, Rosebank

Rosebank Mall is a four-story retail centre, housing everything from fashion and accessory outlets to coffee bars, a Cinema Nouveau and vibrant markets.

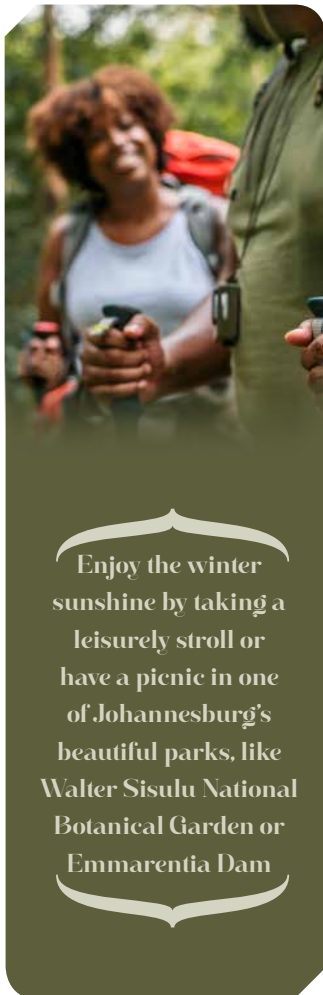
📍 Mall of Africa

Location: Waterfall City, Midrand, Gauteng

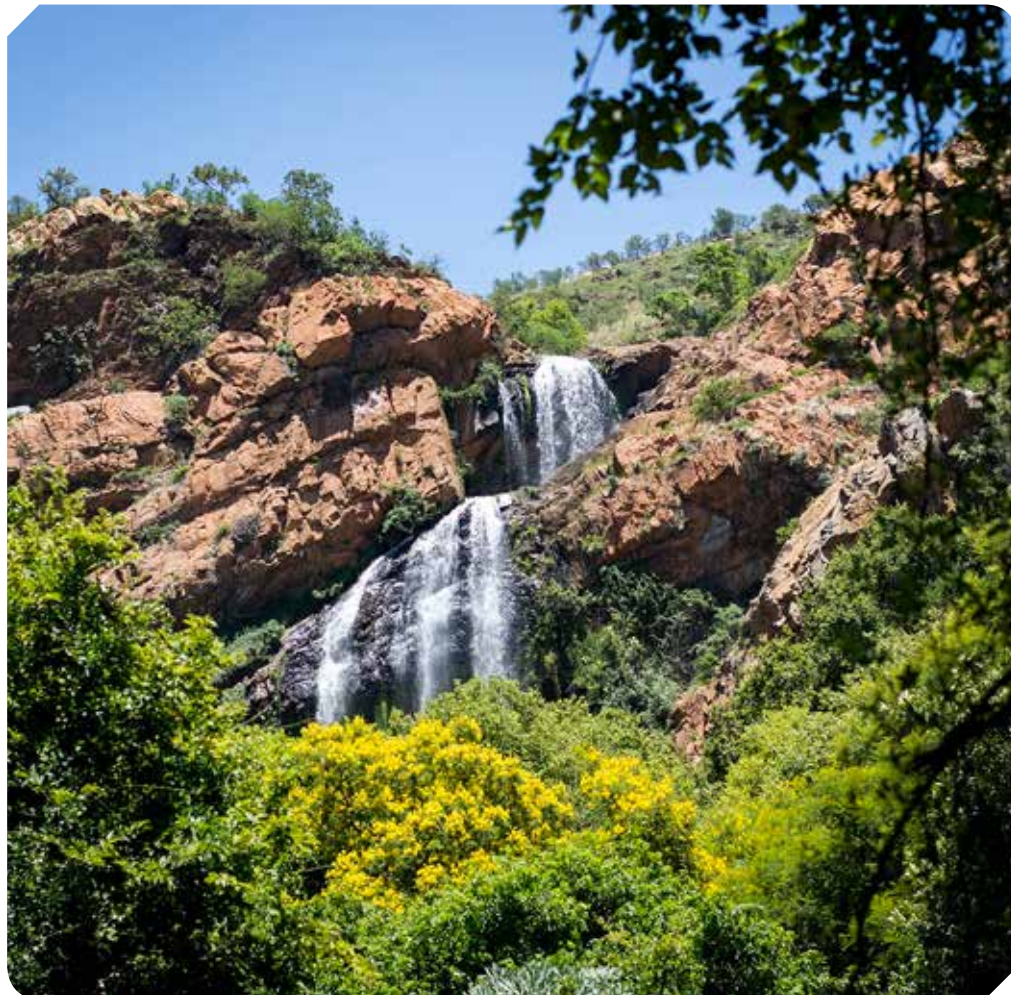
It is the third largest single-phase shopping mall to be built in Africa. The shopping mall has two main levels of shopping as well as an outdoor restaurant plaza which connects directly to the Waterfall City Park.

It boasts over 300 stores covering everything from local and international brands, delicious restaurants and plenty of entertainment for both young and old, you're sure to find everything you seek at this world-class centre.





Enjoy the winter sunshine by taking a leisurely stroll or have a picnic in one of Johannesburg's beautiful parks, like Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden or Emmarentia Dam



Just 30 kilometres west of the Johannesburg city centre is an amazingly quaint experience fondly known as the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden. The 300-hectare garden is home to several rare bird species, which you can spot while lying peacefully on the lush green lawns that date back to 1982. It has been a popular venue for outings ever since and has been voted the best place for a nature escape in Gauteng for several years.

Take your time when visiting this special part of Gauteng. There is a wonderful nursery, a gift and bookshop and a restaurant; and over Christmas and on selected weekends, the grounds play host to sundowner concerts. The star of the show is the garden itself with a succulent rockery, a cycad garden and a water garden with water-loving plants. This outing is for everyone!

Emmarentia Dam is certainly one of the city's most tranquil spots and the setting amongst water and trees is attractive to many weekend visitors who picnic and braai on the grassed lawns. There are woodland and natural grass areas and a tea room that does first-rate scones. The banks of the dam are also the site of the annual summer sunset concerts that see a variety of local and international musicians team up to make music for people to enjoy thoroughly in one of Johannesburg's best-loved venues.



📍 Melville Koppies Nature Reserve

Melville Koppies is a Nature Reserve and a Johannesburg City Heritage Site. Its geology goes back three billion years. Stone tools show that Early Stone Age man camped here as long as 500,000 years ago. There is a Late Stone Age living floor. Within the last 1,000 years Iron Age immigrants arrived, and remains of their kraal walls can be found on the northern slopes. In 1963 an iron-smelting furnace was excavated and can be seen today.

The vegetation of the Koppies is entirely indigenous and is a remarkable example of the richness of highveld grasses, flowers, and trees so close to a city centre. These ridges have looked like this for hundreds of years.



Magaliesberg Mountains



Lion & Safari Park



Johannesburg Zoo



Hot-air ballooning

🕒 Wildlife encounters

Take a day trip to the Lion & Safari Park for a close encounter with wildlife, including lions, giraffes, and zebras. Situated only 13 kilometres from Lanseria Airport only 40 minutes from Johannesburg, the must-see tourist destination; Lion & Safari Park is nestled in the beautiful range and also within the Cradle of Humankind, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The 600-hectare property is home to a vast selection of indigenous species such as lion, cheetah, hyena, leopard, wild dog, sable antelope, kudu, nyala (to mention only a few), the Lion & Safari Park offers a wealth of exciting activities for all ages, guests are guaranteed to get super-close to some of Africa's favourite animals whether you go on an informative guided tour or self-drive. Guests can enjoy a variety of different guided tours.

Visit the Johannesburg Zoo to see a variety of animals and enjoy family-friendly activities. It is a 55-hectare zoo in Johannesburg, South Africa. The zoo is dedicated to the accommodation, enrichment, husbandry, and medical care of wild animals, and houses about 2,000 individuals of 320 species.

Catch a live performance or show at one of Johannesburg's theatres, such as the Market Theatre or the Joburg Theatre. Explore the Magaliesberg Mountains for outdoor activities like hiking, zip-lining, or hot-air ballooning.

Indulge in the diverse culinary scene in Johannesburg. Explore trendy restaurants, cafes, and street food markets to experience the flavours of local South African cuisine, including dishes like bobotie, boerewors, and biltong.

Whether you prefer cultural experiences, outdoor adventures, or culinary delights, Johannesburg has a diverse range of activities to suit various interests, even during the winter months.



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Embracing the vibrant summer vibes

WORDS: MAMBO GICHUKI

As the sun rises high in the azure sky, Tel Aviv, the energetic and bustling city on the Mediterranean Coast, bursts with summer energy. Tel Aviv, known for its vibrant environment, rich culture, and beautiful beaches, is a must-see summer destination for both residents and visitors. Tel Aviv's colourful summer atmosphere makes for a one-of-a-kind and unforgettable experience.



📍 Beach culture

The gorgeous beaches of Tel Aviv are unquestionably one of the city's distinguishing attractions throughout the summer. What's equally impressive is the city's proximity to the beach. Just a few steps away from the rush and activity, you might find yourself seated across from the Mediterranean, the soft murmur of the waves beckoning you to take a dip. From sunrise to dusk, the sandy shores stretch along the coastline and are a centre of activity. Locals and visitors alike visit popular beaches like Gordon Beach and Frishman Beach to bask in the sun, play beach volleyball, or simply relax under colourful umbrellas.

The Gordon Beach at the Tayelet promenade is close to some of the most popular beach bars and restaurants on the coast. This Tel Aviv landmark is well-known for its picturesque layout, but more notably for its Olympic-sized saltwater pool, which is utilised by both professional and recreational swimmers. There are numerous restaurants, activities, and sights around, as well as outstanding UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The pool itself dates from 1956, since it has been rebuilt multiple times subsequently. It is currently a swimming complex with facilities for children and toddlers.

On the other hand, Gordon Beach is packed with activity, and volleyball enthusiasts will love it even more. Even in the winter, amateur and professional games take place virtually every day. Despite its popularity, the beach has enough space for casual visitors.

Frishman Beach is one of the most central, and a popular beach in Tel Aviv. That is not to suggest it isn't among the best. A long expanse of fine golden sand is all a city beach should be. Often cited as one of Tel Aviv's greatest family-friendly beaches, plays up to its reputation with safe swimming and excellent facilities. This is reflected in the beach's Blue Flag award status, which also confirms that the water quality is outstanding.

The dynamic beach culture reflects the city's laid-back attitude and the value of leisure in the middle of a fast-paced urban environment.



📍 Sunset at Jaffa Port

As the day fades into twilight, the old Jaffa Port becomes a shelter for people seeking a more peaceful atmosphere. The contrast between historical charm and modern attraction produces a fascinating atmosphere. Visitors can explore the narrow cobblestone alleyways, dine alfresco at waterfront eateries, and watch the spectacular sunset over the Mediterranean. The bright hues of the sky create a stunning backdrop, making Jaffa Port a must-see destination during the summer.

Jaffa Port boasts a historic heritage, stone structures, and cobblestone alleyways, whereas Tel Aviv Port is a modern cultural, recreational, and commercial magnet.

The current city of Tel Aviv grew from humble origins at Jaffa, where immigrants, troops, and traders moored their ships. The port is renowned as one of the world's oldest, and it is still utilised by local fishermen, while the ancient surrounding area has become a famous tourist destination.

The waterside hangers have been converted into galleries and cultural spaces, including the Nalaga'at Centre, which is maintained by the deaf and blind community, and the Dvir Gallery. From the coastline, ancient cobblestone alleyways lead up past stone structures evocative of old Jerusalem. Galleries, speciality businesses and fine restaurants can be found among the historic structures. The higher levels of the Old Port area include St. Peter's Church, the Wishing Bridge, the Old Jaffa Museum, and the Ilana Goor Museum. It is popular with families who visit the Dyada Centre for children's activities, as well as visitors to the yoga centre, women's centre, conference venue, and Cavim Institute of Design and Architecture.

The promenade is always bustling with street performers, musical events, and outdoor markets. The port offers a modern and dynamic environment for artistic and cultural expression. When the sun goes down, Tel Aviv Port becomes a popular nightlife destination, complete with pubs and clubs.

docaviv

🕒 Festivals and events

Tel Aviv's summer calendar is filled with a plethora of festivals and events that cater to diverse tastes and interests. The city hosts the Tel Aviv International Documentary Film Festival (Docaviv), a major documentary festival in Israel. It screens only Israeli premieres of international and Israeli films and is highly frequented by the national film industry.

There are four award-bearing competitions, special screenings, a retrospective and a master-class which is held by international filmmakers. Additionally, music festivals, street fairs, and cultural events contribute to the festive ambience that permeates the city throughout the summer.

Doof is one of Israel's most prominent trance music labels. They gather more than 50 prominent Israeli and international DJs for a nonstop 72-hour music festival. While The Doof Festival is the main event, Doof and their partner the Paganka crew host parties throughout the year with the goal of creating a meeting place for culture and electronic music in Israel, a modern digital version of the 1960s psychedelic movement while preserving the values of the international raves movement. Over time, the festival's mission has evolved to include ecological preservation of the land, particularly the Kinneret Sea beaches. Today, the festival is a magnet for fans of electronic music and trance culture from Israel and abroad, and it is considered one of the pinnacles of Israeli trance culture.

🕒 Bustling nightlife

As the sun sets, Tel Aviv transforms into a city that never sleeps. Tel Aviv's nightlife is famed, with countless bars, clubs, and seaside parties. From the stylish Rothschild Boulevard to the vibrant Florentin neighbourhood, the city has plenty of alternatives for those looking to dance the night away or relax with a refreshing glass in hand.

Tel Aviv is a true 24-hour metropolis, and most places feature bars and clubs. Several groups of nighttime activities may provide an excellent introduction to the atmosphere.

Here's a list of several popular bars:

Allenby Bars: Moving down Allenby Street and Ben Yehuda Street puts you on the shadier side of Tel Aviv's nightlife.

Florentine and south bars: Tel Aviv's 'Soho' is made up of the Florentin neighbourhood and its surrounding neighbourhoods. Gentrification is gradually converting it from an industrial district to a community of artists and, more recently, hipsters. There is a diverse nightlife scene here.

Jaffa's bars: In Jaffa's Flea Market area, there is a cluster of hipster pubs surrounded by the particular ambience offered by the old stone buildings. The Container, a popular nightlife destination near Jaffa's harbour, offers a stunning line-up of frequently free shows.



🕒 Culinary delights

Summer in Tel Aviv is a feast for the senses, and this includes the culinary scene. With a broad and unique cuisine culture, the city's restaurants and street sellers provide a delectable selection of dishes. From fresh seafood at the harbour to tantalising street cuisine in the Carmel Market, foodies can embark on a culinary adventure that embodies the city's multiculturalism.

Tel Aviv in the summer is a symphony of sunshine, sea, and festivity. Tel Aviv provides an unrivalled summer experience, whether you're enjoying the sun on the sandy beaches, visiting the historic neighbourhoods of Jaffa, or immersing yourself in the city's pulsating nightlife.

Tel Aviv's combination of culture, cuisine, and coastline beauty makes it a must-see destination for visitors looking for a memorable and exciting summer vacation.



The magic of mud therapy

WORDS: KATE NIVISON

'Mud, mud, glorious mud,
Nothing quite like it for cooling the blood ...'

The comical chorus of 'The Hippopotamus Song' from a popular 1960s musical review may not conjure up the most enticing of images when it comes to revisiting one of our oldest forms of medical and beauty therapy. But it does contain an element of truth, in that many animals take a mud bath to cool down and rid themselves of 'unwanted visitors'. Elephants, zebra, warthog and rhino as well as hippos all seem to enjoy a good wallow, and will happily wear a coating of the stuff for weeks to ward off sunburn and insect bites.

For humans, it's a bit more complicated. Fine muds come in a useful range of colours, from black, through reds and ochres, to yellow and white. Together with charcoal, mud was among the first decorative materials used for both body and rock painting, and it made a good 'gel' for elaborate hairstyles in many parts of Africa. Women are often seen wearing a paste of mud and sandalwood on their faces for sun protection, as well as more decorative forms of it for special occasions.

Nor is there anything new-fangled about using mud to treat certain kinds of health problems. In Europe, it can be dated back to 800 BC, by the discovery of ancient wooden baths beside the peaty-black waters of Neydharting Lake in Austria. People must have noticed sick or injured animals making special trips to roll in the muddy fringes of the lake and decided to give it a try.

The Romans certainly gave mud therapy rave reviews, and tribes on the Black Sea even fought for control of the local mud supplies. Cleopatra sent her slaves to bring back Dead Sea mud by the bucketful, and on Turkey's beautiful Lycean coast there is a cave which is said to have supplied the very finest mud for her regular 'facials'. One valued property was its ability to retain heat when applied warm, but keep the wearer cool when used cold. Warm mud in particular, piled on good and thick, seemed to work well for humans, and mud warmed naturally by geothermal heat was a real high-end luxury. No one knew how it worked but people were prepared to go to a lot of trouble because clearly, for many of them, it did work, even if it

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meant looking like an entrant in a warthog look-alike contest. It was considered especially good for aches, pains and intractable skin complaints. In any case, there wasn't much else available, and at least mud didn't make them any worse.

Maybe it was the business of having to leave your dignity at the door, the effect on the décor, or the advent of modern pharmaceuticals with wonder drugs and antibiotics, but traditional mud therapy went into serious decline in most areas of the world until quite recently. Some places, such as the Dead Sea and Neydharting, kept going regardless, but it took what can perhaps be described as a popular revolt against 'big pharma' and everything considered 'synthetic', to bring about the revival it is enjoying today. For one thing, it became clear that some distressing skin conditions such as chronic (long-term) eczema and psoriasis were showing stubborn resistance to modern medicine, and all this encouraged more research into 'natural' therapies, including good old mud.

Inevitably, this renewed interest has also encouraged a lot of New Age daftness.

Here's one website, based in Belize and Texas, offering eight different kinds of mud treatment, from *Daji* (red mud) - 'arouses strength, health, protection, passion and courage', through *Kula* (black) - 'stimulates healing, absorbs and destroys negativity', to *Zitr* (pink) - 'encourages self-improvement, eloquence and intelligence'. They also do weddings and honeymoons, but hey, this is mud we are talking about here, not the Holy Grail.

But when there is substantial anecdotal evidence that something appears to provide relief for a consistent list of ailments – if only for some people – doctors want to know why. The problem is, of course, that no two therapeutic mud deposits are the same, but at least they are now organised into four basic types. Moor muds are peat-based, as at Neydharting. They are 'organic', used at room temperature, and seem to speed recovery from cosmetic surgery and skin complaints. Brine muds (Dead Sea type) may contain as many as 26 minerals including iodine and bromide, and have a healing and calming effect. Fango muds (Italy and Lake Shalla) are



of volcanic origin and high in sulphur. They usually come ready-warmed by nature and their mineral content varies according to their place of origin. Again, these seem to help with eczema and psoriasis as well as some arthritic conditions. Clay muds (such as Fullers Earth) are very fine and used for their astringent and light abrasive properties in cosmetic scrubs and face masks.

Another advantage of mud is that it can be used where extensive massage or water bathing may not be advisable. However, it is not recommended for anyone with acute pain caused by inflammation. The medical consensus now seems to be that full-body, warm mud treatment works by a steady transfer of heat to the skin where it stimulates the surface sensors and speeds up general metabolism. Unlike soaking in hot water, which works rather differently, it tends to draw toxins to the skin surface, thus relieving the stress on other organs to rid the body of them. The effect on the skin itself is gently abrasive and astringent, with a possible increase of oxygen supply, while some of the minerals will stop infections from spreading.

There is a lot of research going on, especially in the USA, Slovakia, Hungary and Turkey, with an emphasis on why mud therapy is effective for some people and not others with the same complaint, and why it sometimes works when nothing else seems to help. One theory is that the various combinations of active ingredients can somehow penetrate the skin, enter the bloodstream and remedy a patient's particular mineral deficiencies. This would go some way to explain the rather 'hit and miss' nature of mud's effectiveness, given that therapeutic muds can vary so much from place to place, and how varied each individual's mineral requirements can be. Proving this to the medical establishment won't be easy, because the skin is virtually waterproof, and considered to be a very efficient barrier against almost anything we choose

to slap on it in the name of health or beauty, which is why so many 'anti-ageing' creams are ineffective.

A more promising area of research is in the category of illnesses connected with the malfunctioning of the auto-immune system. These include some arthritic and rheumatic conditions, and a range of often related or overlapping conditions such as Chronic pain syndrome, Fibromyalgia (severe tissue and joint pain) and Chronic fatigue/post-viral Fatigue syndrome (also known as ME or 'yuppie flu'). There has been a big increase in all these conditions, especially among women and particularly in the USA. In such cases, it is thought that something triggers the immune system to start attacking itself. Improvements in getting patients more pain-free and mobile have been noted after mud bath treatments over several weeks, repeated every few months and then at increasing intervals.

That humble mud could come to the rescue in difficult and distressing cases such as these would come as no surprise to the ancient doctors of Greece, traditional healers in Africa and Asia, or possibly even hippos or elephant matriarchs who remember the best places for the family to enjoy a good wallow. At least the animals make it look like fun, and, in the right company in beautiful surroundings, which may be half the cure.

Mud therapy for all manner of ailments is available through the local health services in Austria, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Italy where centres such as Salsamaggiore Terme have such wonderful Art Nouveau décor that they make you feel better anyway. For serious cases, one session isn't enough. On the Dead Sea, many clinics have been set up so that patients can take advantage of mud treatments on a regular basis, which is usually much more effective.

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UniSey Graduation 2023

UniSey held its 12th Graduation ceremony of class 2023, with 142 students who successfully completed their respective programmes of study at certificate, diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate degree levels. UniSey recorded 11 Best Performers with First Class and Distinctions classification.



IMAGE CREDIT: © MARIO TADINAC/OCEANX

OceanXplorer expedition in Seychelles

UniSey staff and students had a once in a lifetime experience on an advanced research and filmmaking vessel, The OceanXplorer. With 72 passengers including a team of 14 scientists from Seychelles, the team conducted deep-sea scientific research, to collect invaluable data. The research is to support the sustainable development of the Blue Economy and the governance of Seychelles' vast ocean territory. The research was executed to establish baseline measures within the newly proclaimed MPAs, to build upon previous data collected around Aldabra Atoll, and to collect critical metrics, such as water quality, which will all be used for improved and data driven management of Seychelles' Blue Economy and the governance of its vast ocean territory.

IMAGE CREDIT: UNISEY ENV.SCI. STUDENTS | © SAVE OUR SEAS FOUNDATION



Save Our Seas Foundation D'Arros Research Centre staff and UniSey students on the lookout for Manta Rays off D'Arros Island

UniSey Interdisciplinary Research Seminars

To commemorate UniSey's 15th Anniversary, the University of Seychelles has scheduled its weekly Interdisciplinary Research Seminars, to provide opportunities for researchers in Seychelles and internationally to present their research and also encourage networking and collaborations. Some examples of seminars conducted:

- Practice Based Inquiry by Dr. Michael Hall, University of Seychelles
- Me, Myself and AI: Teaching and Learning in a new Technology Age by Dr. Adrian Jarvis, Huddersfield University
- The virus of the 'others'? Corona and discursive othering in Arab media: Lessons for Small Island States (SIS) media by Mr. Samuel Mundua, University of Seychelles
- La grammaticalisation de la réciprocité dans les créoles – l'exception Seychelloise, par Prof. Sibylle Kriegel, L'Université d'Aix-Marseille.

The latest issue of the Seychelles Research Journal is available online at: <https://unisey.ac.sc/research/>

D'Arros Research Centre (SOSF-DRC)

Through a combined passion for providing field-ready scientists for Seychelles future, the University of Seychelles' Department of Environmental Science (UniSey) and Save Our Seas Foundation's D'Arros Research Centre (SOSF-DRC) united to create the D'Arros UniSey Field Course, a week-long skills development programme for Year 2 Environmental Science students to experience science in a remote island context. The 2023 inaugural course saw eight Environment students and four UniSey staff flown from Mahé to D'Arros Island in the Amirantes Group, fully funded by SOSF-DRC. The weekly course had the students exposed to both marine and terrestrial science and conservation skills. Highlights of the trip included turtle monitoring, deploying baited remote underwater stereo-video systems (stereo-BRUVS), conducting

manta ray surveys as well as a day trip to the unique St Joseph Atoll. In the atoll, students learnt how to catch and tag juvenile sharks, as well as experienced first-hand the vibrant and abundant life associated with remote, protected environments. The course culminated in a thought experiment, where students were required to deliver a two-minute 'elevator pitch' to the SOSF-DRC panellists on a research project they would like to conduct. This inspired creative and aspirational thinking about the type of research projects that would interest them in the future. Overall, this course gave students' insights into the challenges of researching a remote island, whilst having access to high quality research equipment. It was a resounding success and thoroughly enjoyed by all. The generosity of the SOSF and the SOSF-DRC was highly appreciated, particularly with giving students exposure to research beyond the Mahé context.



The International Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Computer, Data Sciences and Applications (ACDSA)

In collaboration with the University of Aksaray University, Turkey and the University of Mauritius, the University of Seychelles (UniSey) hosted an International Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Computer, Data Sciences and Applications (ACDSA) supported by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). The ACDSA is a peer-reviewed international conference that aims to bring together scientists, academics, researchers, and industrial representatives to exchange ideas, to disseminate high-quality research results and to present new developments on topics related to Artificial Intelligence, Control, Data Sciences and applications. The conference featured a comprehensive technical programme offering numerous technical sessions with papers showcasing the latest technologies, and applications. UniSey hosted 59 international participants from different universities and countries in addition to the UniSey staff and local stakeholders.

International and local collaborations

UniSey embarks on new collaborations with international and local partners to continuously build stronger and more win-win strategic alliances for future opportunities for staff and students.

University of Colorado Springs, USA and the US Embassy in Seychelles for possibility of an MoU for opportunities such as new programme development, exchange of staff and students among others.

University of Slavonki Brod, Croatia for Erasmus + Inter-Institutional mobility for staff and students to Croatia and Seychelles.

Collaborations with the Seychelles Police, Seychelles Institute of Art and Design, Pillay R Group and Enterprise Seychelles Agency (ESA), for teaching, research, staff welfare and training opportunities.



UNIVERSITY OF SEYCHELLES
Knowledge hub of the Indian Ocean

PROGRAMME LIST

The University of Seychelles

- Diploma in Computing and IT
- Diploma in Journalism
- Bachelor of Laws (LLB) Honours
- B.Ed. Early Childhood
- B.Ed. Primary
- B.Ed. Secondary Education with specialisation in History / Geography / Mathematics / English
- B.Ed. Secondary – Social Sciences
- BSc in Business Administration with specialisation in Human Resource Management / International Business / Financial Services / Marketing
- BSc (Honours) in Economics and Finance **NEW!**
- BSc (Honours) in Travel and Tourism Economics **NEW!**
- BSc (Honours) Environmental Science
- BSocSc (Honours) with specialisation in Social Work/ Youth and Community Work
- Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CEMBA)
- Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration (CEMPA)
- MA in Education (with PGCE exit point)
- MA in Peace and Conflict Resolution
- MSc in Marine Science and Sustainability
- Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) **NEW!**

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Important Information

Airport

Seychelles International Airport is the main airport on the main island of Mahé. There are two terminals for International and Domestic.

Information

There is a tourist information/ hotel booking desk in Arrivals. There are ATMs, a Bank and a Bureau de Change at the airport.

Time

Seychelles is four hours ahead of GMT and three hours ahead of Central European Time.

Electric supply

The power sockets are of type G. The standard voltage is 240 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz.

Language

Creole, English and French are the official languages of the Seychelles.

Currency

The Seychelles Rupee. There is no restriction on the import and export of domestic and foreign currency in the country. However, anything over SCR 50,000 or foreign currency equivalent in any form should be declared on arrival or departure. Banks and Bureaux de Change are authorised dealers in foreign currency.

Credit cards

Most credit cards and travellers' cheques are accepted.

Banking

Banking hours are generally Monday-Friday 0830hrs-1430hrs. Saturday 0830hrs-1100hrs

Public holidays 2024

- New Year 1 Jan
- Holiday 2 & 3 Jan
- Good Friday 29 March
- Easter Sunday 31 March

- Easter Monday 1 April
- Labour Day 1 May
- Corpus Christi 30 May
- Constitution Day 18 June
- National Day 29 June
- Assumption Day 15 Aug
- All Saints Day 1 Nov
- Immaculate Conception 8 Dec
- Holiday 9 Dec
- Christmas Day 25 Dec

Passport requirement

Valid passports or other travel documents recognised by Seychelles are required for entry into Seychelles. The passport MUST be valid for the period of the intended stay.

Visa requirement

Visa is not required for entry into the Republic of Seychelles regardless of the nationality of the passport holder.

A copy of valid return ticket and proof of confirmed accommodation is required. www.ics.gov.sc

Ground transport

Driving in Seychelles is on the left side of the road. You can rent cars on Mahé and Praslin. There are several car hire counters outside the arrivals hall at Mahé International Airport.

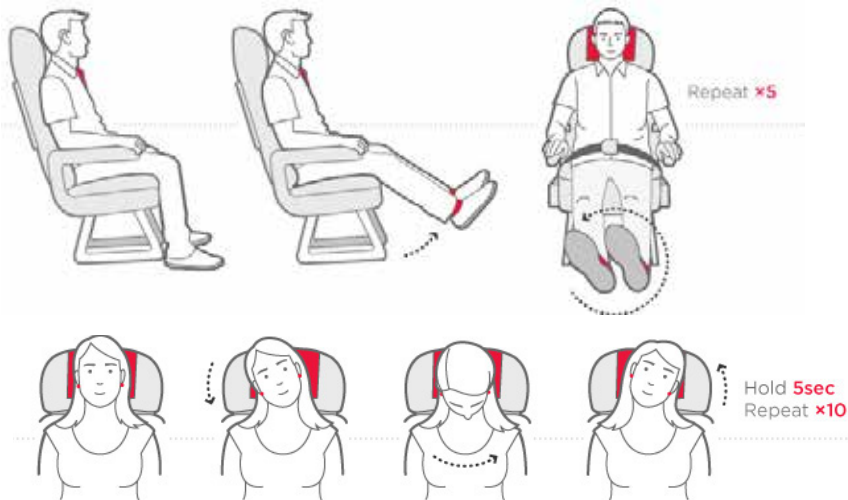
Taxi service

Taxi service is safe and reliable and you can get one from the International Airport or call for one from your hotel.

Tourist information office

The Seychelles Tourist Office is located in Independence House, Victoria, Mahé.

These simple exercises will help to relieve the tiredness and stiffness associated with flying. Check with your doctor first if you have any health conditions which might be adversely affected by exercise.



Shoulder circles

- Sit tall and move forward in your seat.
- Bring your shoulders up towards your ears, then circle back downwards.
- Reverse the exercise by lifting your shoulders towards your ears and drop them back.

Neck rolls

- Sit back in your seat and flatten the headrest.
- Gently and slowly roll your neck to one side, then back through the centre towards the other side.
- Try keeping the back of your neck extended.

Sit up straight

- Place the pillow at the hollow of your back.
- Sit tall in your seat to avoid compressing your spine.
- Do not cross your legs. Instead, try to sit with your weight evenly balanced.

Ankle circles

- Sit tall in your seat, and place the pillow under your thigh, just above the knee.
- Keep your weight even as you circle your foot around, keeping the whole foot as still as possible.

Seychelles Travel Authorization (STA)

- In compliance with the local immigration Act, all travellers must apply for an Electronic Travel Authorization through seychelles.govtas.com
- STA paperwork is necessary for travel and must be shown at the check-in counter.
- The approval process can take up to 24 hours, therefore request the paperwork at least 72 hours before the travel date.
- If the approved STA document is not produced, the airline may refuse to embark passengers to Seychelles.
- All travellers should have travel insurance that covers the duration of their stay in Seychelles.

Inside Air Seychelles

News and information



Inside Air Seychelles

Global offices

Route network

Our fleet

AIR SEYCHELLES REAFFIRMS PRESENCE IN INDIA



Air Seychelles, the island nation's flagship airline, attended India's leading tourism trade fairs in February 2024, reaffirming its position in one of the most popular destinations on their regional network.

Bird Travel, Air Seychelles' General Sales Agent in India, represented the airline at this year's OTM (On the Move) travel show. The OTM, dubbed Asia's premier tourism trade event, took place at the Jio World Convention in Mumbai from 8-10 February 2024.

Harsh Trivedi, Bird Travel's Sales Manager speaks about the show "Our participation at OTM Mumbai was a resounding success. We were thrilled to connect with so many travel agents and share our passion for the Seychelles. We are confident this will translate into increased visitor arrivals."

At the South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange 2024 (SATTE) in Delhi from 22-24 February, the airline's Chief Commercial Officer, Charles Johnson, and Manager Sales & Market Development, Eliza Moise, brought the Creole Spirit to enthusiastic potential passengers, promoting the carriers'

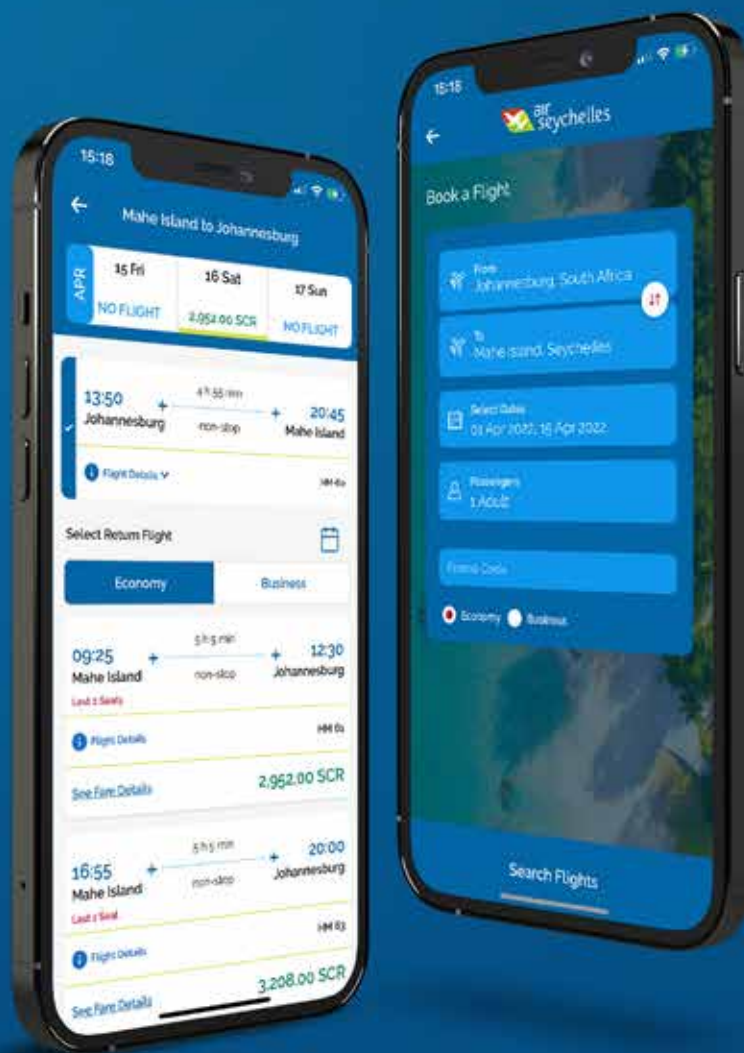
connections alongside Tourism Seychelles representatives marketing the Seychelles as a destination.

"It's great being back at SATTE this year. This is the largest travel show in South Asia, giving us maximum exposure to meet key decision makers in the industry. It's also a place to reconnect with existing partners, who are thrilled with our additional second weekly flight from Mumbai commencing in May", expressed Charles Johnson.

Every year, thousands of travel professionals visit these trade exhibitions to make vital networking and connections. Such shows provide a perfect platform for establishing and forging new business ties with nearly 1600 exhibitors from 60 countries. Participation also allows you to learn about industry trends and market development, as well as attend workshops and conversations.

Air Seychelles, voted in 2023 as the Indian Ocean's Leading Airline Brand at the World Travel Awards, currently operates a weekly flight between Mumbai and the Seychelles.





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seychelles**
Flying the Creole Spirit



Our Network

International Network



Disclaimer: Actual flight paths depends on the weather, government approval or other operational factors. The flight routes depicted on this map are for illustrative purposes only.

MAP KEY

- Air Seychelles Flights
- - - - - Air Seychelles Seasonal or Charter Route
- Air Seychelles Codeshares
- Air Seychelles Interline Partner

CODESARE PARTNERS



INTERLINE PARTNERS



Sri Lankan Airlines Network (India)



Our Fleet

The airline now operates the youngest fleet of **A320neo aircraft**. On its domestic network, the airline owns and operates five DHC6-400 aircraft and offers over 350 weekly scheduled services between Mahé and Praslin, as well as charter flights to other islands within the Seychelles archipelago.

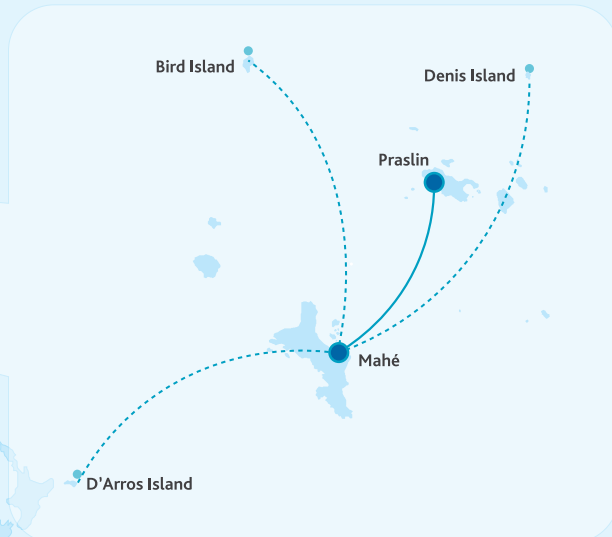
Air Seychelles also offers a 30 minute scenic flight product, providing guests a bird's eye view of the Seychelles inner islands.



Airbus A320-200neo

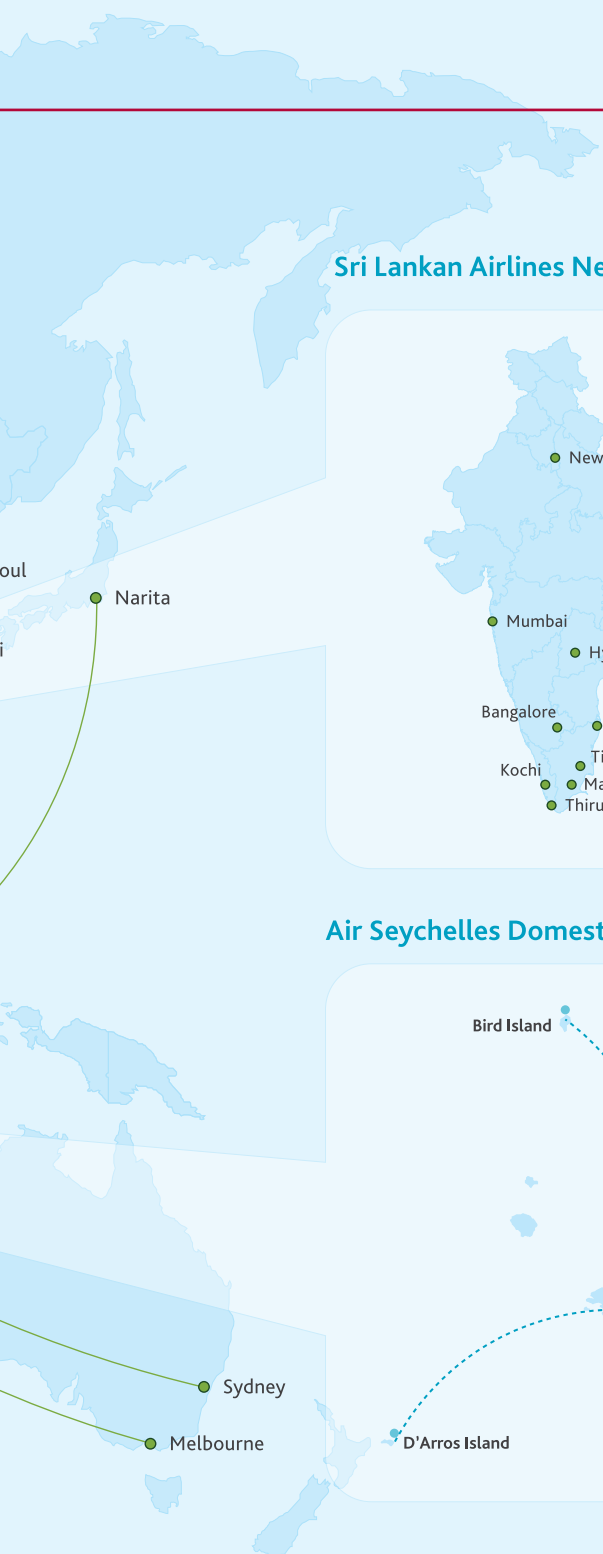
Aircraft: 2
 Length: 37.57m
 Wingspan: 34.09m
 Passenger capacity: 168
 Cruising speed: 840km/h
 Cruising altitude: 37,000ft

Air Seychelles Domestic Network



Dhc-6 Twin Otter-400 Series

Aircraft: 5
 Length: 15.80m
 Wingspan: 19.80m
 Passenger capacity: 19
 Cruising speed: 260km/h
 Cruising altitude: 10,000ft



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Air Seychelles global offices

<p>India</p> 	<p>Capital: New Delhi Languages: Hindi, English Currency: Indian Rupee Area: 3,287,590 km² Population: 1,263,830,000 Air Seychelles destination: Mumbai</p>	<p>Bird Group Ltd 204, 2nd Floor A Wing Kanakia Wall Street 400093 Mumbai Tel: +91 959 4013686 Email: hmsales@bird.travel hmres@bird.travel</p>
<p>Israel</p> 	<p>Capital: Jerusalem Language: Hebrew Currency: Israel Shekel Area: 20,770 km² Population: 9,085,610 Air Seychelles destination: Tel Aviv</p>	<p>AIRLINES GSA 3 Gilboa St Airport City 7019900 Tel Aviv Tel: +972 3 5160598 Email: hm@airlines-gsa.com</p>
<p>Maldives</p> 	<p>Capital: Malé Languages: Dhivehi, English Currency: Maldivian rufiyaa Land area: 300 km² Population: 579,330 Air Seychelles destination: Malé</p>	<p>Universal Travel Services Pvt Ltd 39 Orchid Magu PO Box 2015 Malé 20-02 Republic of Maldives Tel: +960 3332231 Email: Shifa.Faiz@utsmaldives.com</p>
<p>Mauritius</p> 	<p>Capital: Port Louis Languages: French, English, Creole Currency: Rupees Area: 2,040 km² Population: 1,243,000 Air Seychelles destination: Port Louis</p>	<p>Rogers Aviation (Mauritius) Ltd The Gardens Bagatelle Office Park Moka, Mauritius Tel: +230 2026697 Email: salim.mohungoo@rogers-aviation.com</p>
<p>Seychelles</p> 	<p>Capital: Victoria Languages: Seychellois Creole, English Currency: Seychelles Rupee Area: 456 km² Population: 95,235 Air Seychelles destination: Mahé & Praslin</p>	<p>Air Seychelles Ltd Seychelles International Airport PO Box 386 Mahé Tel: +248 4391000 Email: callcentre@airseychelles.com</p>
<p>South Africa</p> 	<p>Capital: Pretoria Languages: English, Afrikaans (11 official languages) Currency: South African Rand Area: 1,221,037 km² Population: 45,919,000 Air Seychelles destination: Johannesburg</p>	<p>Rogers Aviation 3A Riley Rd, Building 11 Bedfordview Office Park, Bedfordview Johannesburg Tel: +27 11 326 4440 Email: airseychelles@rogers-aviation.co.za Reservations2@rogers-aviation.co.za benjaminc@rogers-aviation.co.za</p>
<p>Sri Lanka</p> 	<p>Capital: Colombo Languages: Sinhala, Tamil Currency: Sri Lankan Rupee Area: 65,610 km² Population: 22.16 million Air Seychelles destination: Colombo</p>	<p>Air Park (Pvt) Ltd. 377A/1 Galle Road, Colombo 03 Sri Lanka Tel: +94 (0) 11 237 2870 Email: airseychelles@airpark.aero</p>

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