



Dear Valued Passengers,

Welcome aboard the National Airline, our pride! Get comfortable for the journey ahead and allow yourselves to be pampered by our award-winning cabin crew, crowned for the second consecutive year as the best in the Indian Ocean by the World Travel Awards. Whatever the nature of your trip, we are delighted to have you onboard and appreciate your choice to fly with us.

Allow me to share some of our latest, exciting news. As they say, in aviation, no two days are ever the same, and at Air Seychelles, it is no exception. In January, we received the ISAGO certification for the first time and also renewed our IOSA validation, not an easy feat, as our ground handling operations team can vouch. Our commitment to safety remains at all-time high and we cannot allow ourselves to be complacent. My heartfelt gratitude to my team for making these certifications possible. Read all about it on page 66.

Our network will also expand in May, with the launch of a six-weekly flight to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, recognising the increasing interest from travellers in the Middle East region. Offering the glitz and glam of Dubai, but with a little less hectic energy, it is proving very popular with our locals. This new route plays a crucial role in enhancing air connectivity and boosting tourism, the pillar of our economy. We recommend that you follow our social media pages or website for our updates and promotions on the routes we serve.

We also made our way back to the French Territory of Réunion. Our seasonal operations are very warmly met by our fellow islanders, especially on school holidays. Look for these nonstop flights in April and July for your next mini-break. Our expansion to the Middle East is also beneficial to the people of Réunion, providing a much-needed link to this region of the world. More on this in the next issue.

I now invite you to sit back and relax. We welcome your feedback and suggestions, as this will allow us to elevate our service delivery and make for a better experience for our most valued guests. You can do this by either filling in the post-flight survey that will be sent to you or by writing to our team on info@airseychelles.com. We love hearing from you.

Fasten your seatbelts and look forward to flying the Creole Spirit.

Don't forget to check out the view!



Captain Sandy Benoiton
Chief Executive Officer



Enhancing air connectivity



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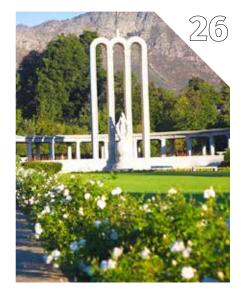
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Whether you're catching waves, practicing sunset yoga, or savouring fresh seafood by the sea, the city's natural allure is undeniable.

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Cover image:
Soft pink sands meet the tranquil turquoise waters of La Digue Island,
where nature's beauty knows no bounds. Image © freepik.com

silhouette

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Club Liberté Casino is located right next to the Four Seasons resort at Baie Lazare, Mahe, and in close proximity to other luxurious 5-star properties the likes of Kempinski, Mango House, Canopy by Hilton and within easy reach of the Constance Ephelia Resort and the new Cheval Blanc.

Guests of the Canopy by Hilton can enjoy a daily free shuttle service between the hotel and casino.

To enquire more about our services, please contact us on +248 260 54 59 or email us on marketing@casino-liberte.com

We look forward to entertaining you very soon!



Our main gaming floor boasts five tables, offering Roulette, Blackjack, Poker and all your favourite Slot machines, all with limits set to suit all player budgets.

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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 daily at 2pm for Slots play / 6pm for tables games & Restaurant and closes at 2am.

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.

View our menus & book on www.casino-liberte.com/seychelles-restaurant

SCAN & BOOK Get 10% discount off Food & Drinks at 5 Spices Restaurant



Branded Residences: the unique advantages and benefits defined

or discerning investors and high-net-worth individuals,
real estate is no longer just about location – it's about
experience, service, and long-term value. This is where
branded residences have redefined luxury property ownership.
No longer an emerging trend, they are now a cornerstone of the
global luxury real estate market, offering a compelling mix of
exclusivity, convenience, and financial benefits.

Branded residences, which are luxury properties associated with renowned brands, have demonstrated notable capital appreciation rates globally. While specific annual appreciation rates can vary based on location, brand affiliation, and market conditions, these properties often command a price premium over comparable non-branded luxury residences. Research has shown

that the average price premium for branded residences globally stands at more than 30%, with higher premiums sometimes being observed in emerging markets.

Unmatched Prestige & Global Recognition

Owning a residence attached to a world-renowned brand – be it Four Seasons, Ritz-Carlton or Meliá – instantly elevates a property's status. These residences carry the hallmarks of elite hospitality, ensuring that owners enjoy a five-star lifestyle with a brand that stands as a seal of excellence. This **built-in prestige** adds to the potential long-term upside in the value of the property, making branded residences an attractive asset in the international luxury real estate market. Their popularity



is reflected in the sector's rapid growth, which is projected to expand by 83% through 2030, and is soon to be introduced to Seychelles in the form of The Residences at Meliá Seychelles on Mahé.

Effortless Ownership & Hassle-Free Management

Unlike traditional second-home ownership, branded residences provide an entirely hands-off experience. Property management, maintenance, housekeeping, and even rental administration are seamlessly handled by the hotel or brand operator. This means that owners can enjoy their residence without the usual burdens of property upkeep – an invaluable benefit for global investors who split time between multiple residences.

Consistent Rental Income & Capital Appreciation

With the rise of experiential travel, demand for high-end, serviced accommodation continues to grow. Branded residences, particularly those within an integrated hotel rental programme, generate **passive income** when owners are not in residence. Moreover, statistics and research show that branded residences can command a **premium of 25-35%** over non-branded luxury properties, ensuring strong capital appreciation over time.

Capital appreciation and new unit prices in Seychelles' real estate market have over the past decade or so been notable, particularly in high-end residential developments.

Looking ahead, a snapshot analysis shows that the residential real estate sector in Seychelles is projected to grow by over







5% annually from 2025 to 2029, reaching a market volume of approximately US\$5.8 billion by 2029.

This growth is driven by rising demand from foreign investors and the country's appeal as a luxury destination.

Exclusive Services & Privileges

Unlike conventional real estate, branded residences offer a range of bespoke services – 24/7 concierge, in-residence dining, luxury spas, and access to hotel's facilities and sometimes even a private beach access – providing an unmatched living experience. Many brands also extend VIP privileges, such as **priority bookings**, preferential rates, owner discounts, global reciprocity, **and access to exclusive events**, adding further value beyond the physical property itself.

Resilience in Market Downturns

Historically, branded residences have demonstrated **greater resilience** in economic downturns compared to non-branded luxury properties. The strength of an internationally recognised brand attracts affluent buyers and maintains demand, making these properties a **secure investment choice** even in fluctuating real estate markets.

The Future of Luxury Real Estate

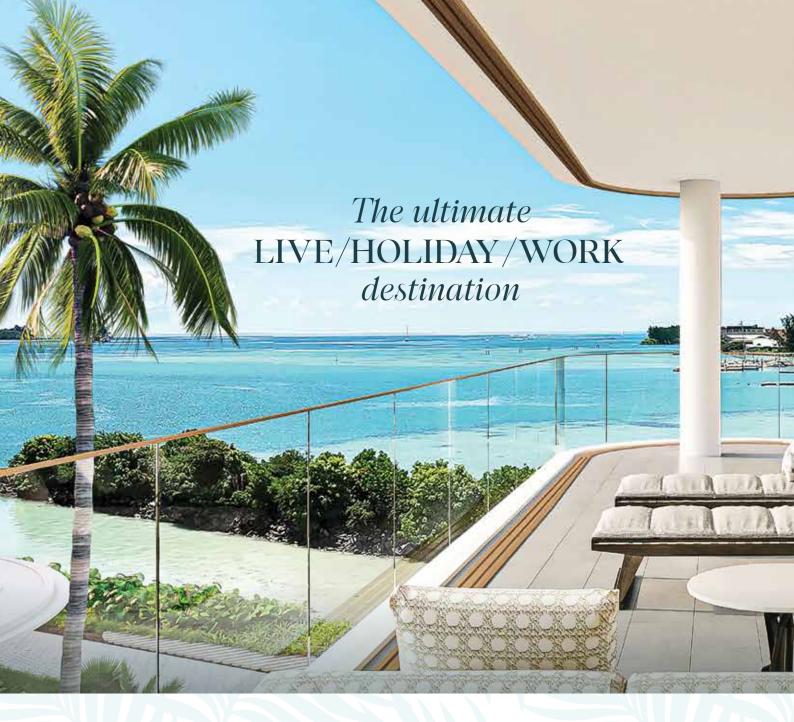
As global wealth expands and luxury buyers seek security, convenience, and prestige, branded residences are poised to dominate the premium real estate landscape. Whether as a primary home, a vacation retreat, or an investment vehicle, they offer a compelling proposition that blends lifestyle with financial sensibility – an asset class that continues to outperform traditional luxury real estate.

For investors seeking **an effortless blend of luxury living and financial returns**, branded residences present an unparalleled opportunity in today's high-end property market.

Summary

Brands offer substantial reassurance in terms of quality, design, maintenance and management. They provide a protective shield, instilling confidence in buyers that the standards of an off-plan property will meet high expectations. Buyers can also expect consistency in amenities, security, design and service level, alongside the prestige of owning a branded property that minimises worries about maintenance, security and monthly ownership cost during their absences. The availability of comprehensive hotel-like services, such as 24/7 concierge, room service, daily breakfast, housekeeping, water shuttles and secure parking enhances this convenience.

Johannesburg to Seychelles Paradise is only hours away. Air Seychelles offers the shortest route to the idyllic island paradise with direct flights from Johannesburg. Flights bookable on airseychelles.com Download our App or visit your local travel agents. App Store



The first branded residential apartment project in Seychelles. A collaboration with the legendary Meliá group. Seafront living, breathtaking views, 5 star hotel services, world class facilities and global privileges.

Elevated Waterfront Living from \$490,000 (Units come fully fitted and furnished. Price shown includes all transfer costs)

*The developer is offering a 5% p.a guaranteed net rental return for three years to the first 50% of buyers of units in the Rental Pool. The artist renderings, representations and Interior decorations, finishes, appliances, and furnishings shown are for illustrative purposes only.



Become an owner

Completion December 2025.

Maryna Morin-Adeline

+248 260 59 00

maryna@the residence satmelia seychelles.com

THE RESIDENCES AT MELIÃ SEYCHELLES



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REAL ESTATE





Constitution Day Date: 18 June 2025 Venue: Victoria, Mahé

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 2025 Venue: Victoria. Mahé

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, and 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.





The Seychelles Challenge

Date: 20 – 27 July 2025 Venue: Seychelles

Experience the ultimate sailing adventure in the turquoise waters of the Seychelles. The Seychelles Challenge is a sailing adventure like no other: Picture yourself navigating crystal-clear seas, with vibrant coral reefs teeming with life just beneath the surface. The trade winds fill your sails as you chart a course through a stunning archipelago, where granite peaks rise majestically from the ocean.

Over the course of seven days, you get to discover secluded coves, pristine beaches, and lush tropical landscapes. Beyond the thrill of the race, immerse yourself in the Seychellois culture. Enjoy the warmth and hospitality of the locals, savour the delicious Creole cuisine, and witness the unparalleled natural beauty that makes this destination a sailor's dream.

Whether you're a seasoned racer or a passionate cruiser, or whether you seek the comfort of a chartered catamaran or race with your own yacht, the Seychelles Challenge promises an unforgettable experience.

Join us for an adventure of a lifetime. Embrace the challenge, explore paradise, and create memories that will last forever. Register today and don't miss your chance to be part of this extraordinary event.

SeyMobility accesible taxi

SeyMobility, Seychelles' pioneering accessible taxi service, aims to transform transportation for disabled individuals and boost the tourism market by providing inclusive transport across Mahé. The service was officially opened on 30 November 2024 at a ceremony held at Lo Brizan Restaurant and Gallery in Au Cap. Mr. Jaya Nair shared his inspiring journey during the event, recounting the challenges he faced after returning to Seychelles following a life-altering spinal cord injury sustained in the United States.



The National Art Dubai 2025

Date: 18 – 20 April 2025 Venue: Madinat Jumeirah

It is scheduled to feature a wide array of artists and galleries displaying contemporary, modern, and digital art from the area and around the world. There will be around 100 galleries representing 50 countries. Of them, 20 will be showing for the first time. The line-up will include both established and upcoming artists, as well as work from the UAE, the region, and beyond, underlining the fair's role as a platform for discovery. The line-up won't only include established and emerging artists but will also represent work from the UAE, the region and beyond, emphasising the fair as a platform for discovery.

There will be three sections. Bawwaba will showcase ten solo exhibitions of artworks that explore the primary question: how can we envisage new kinds of coexistence, both among people and with our planet? Art Dubai Modern will highlight the region's Modern masters who have had an impact throughout the twentieth century. Art Dubai Digital will look at the interface of new media art and technology.

Yom HaAtzma'ut 2025

Date: 1 May 2025

Venue: Mount Herzl, Jerusalem

Every year on Independence Day, an official celebration takes place on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem in the evening. The ritual includes a speech from the Speaker of the Knesset (Israel's parliament), cultural performances, the construction of complex 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 who have made significant social contributions in a certain region are invited to light the candles. Many cities have outdoor entertainment in city squares, including top Israeli artists and fireworks shows. Cars are barred from driving through the streets that surround the squares, allowing people to sing and dance.





Buddha Purnima

Date: 5 May 2025 Venue: India

Buddhists from all across the world celebrate this event. This auspicious day commemorates Gautama Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and death, and is widely celebrated in the Buddhist community. The event 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 visit temples on Vesak to hear monks deliver sermons and read old poetry. Devout Buddhists may spend the entire day at one or several temples. Some temples display a small figurine of Buddha as a new born, and visitors to the shrine pour water on the statue. This indicates a fresh and new start.

Many Buddhists pay special attention to Buddha's teachings on Vesak, and many people donate money, food, or merchandise to organisations that help the poor, elderly, and sick.



Eid al-Adha

Date: 5 – 9 June 2025 Venue: Malé, Maldives

Eid al-Adha concludes the Pilgrimage to Makkah. Eid al-Adha lasts for three days and commemorates Ibrahim's (Abraham) willingness to obey God by sacrificing his son.

According to the Quran, Ibrahim was about to sacrifice his son when a voice from heaven stopped him and allowed him to make something else as a 'great sacrifice'. In the Old Testament, it is a ram that is sacrificed instead of the son.

During the feast of Eid al-Adha, Muslims re-enact Ibrahim's obedience by sacrificing a cow or ram. The family will eat about a third of the meal a third goes to friends and relatives, and the remaining third is donated to the poor and needy.

The giving of charity in the form of money, food or clothes to the homeless or poor is another key tradition of Eid al-Adha.

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

Date: 9 – 12 June 2025

Venue: Gallaghar Convention Centre - 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 2025 edition will establish a new standard, demonstrating the potential to change the food and beverage industry in this vibrant region.





MAMMA MIA!

Date: 11 – 22 June 2025 Venue: Etihad Arena, Yas Island

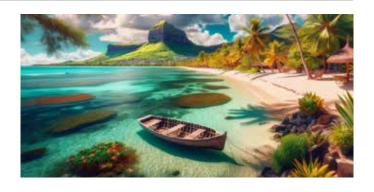
Enjoy MAMMA MIA! which recreates ABBA's legendary song and enchantment. MAMMA MIA! has captivated audiences around the world by bringing ABBA's classic songs to life via a delightful story filled with love, laughter, and unforgettable melodies. Judy Craymer's renowned musical tells the light-hearted and entertaining story of a mother, her child, and three potential fathers on a lovely Greek island.

Since its debut in London's West End in 1999, MAMMA MIA! has attracted more than 65 million people worldwide.

Summer Solstice Date: 21 June 2025

Venue: Port Louis

Celebrate the summer solstice in Port Louis with a mix of sun-soaked activities and cultural discoveries. With beautiful weather and a plethora of activities, now is the time to explore the heart of Mauritius. Whether you've spent your day exploring the depths of the ocean or immersing yourself in Port Louis' cultural richness, the longest day of the year will be an amazing experience. With excellent visibility and a mild breeze, this is the time to capture the atmosphere of this dynamic metropolis.



Website in minutes

Building a website may seem like a big task, but in today's digital world, it is critical for developing an online presence and communicating with a global audience. Whatever business, service, or product you have, there must be information available online. Otherwise, you may be overlooked in a competitive market. With the correct stages and equipment, it becomes a manageable and gratifying project. This guide will help you develop a functional and visually appealing website in four steps.





Step 1: Define the purpose and audience

Before you start designing and developing your website, be sure you understand its objective. Is it for a business, a personal blog, or a digital portfolio? Identify your target audience so that the content and user experience are tailored to their needs.



Step 2: Choose a domain name and hosting service

Choose a domain name that is unique, memorable, and appropriate to your website's goal, and then register it. Choose a reputable hosting firm to store your website's data and make it available online. Select a platform depending on your technical capabilities and needs. For drag-and-drop ease, consider using platforms such as Wix, Squarespace, or WordPress.com





Step 3: Plan the structure and start developing

A well-structured website should include key pages like Home, About Us, Services, Blog, and Contact to ensure seamless navigation and a positive user experience. The Home page should be visually appealing, informative, and optimised with relevant keywords to make a strong first impression. The About Us page builds credibility by sharing your company's story, goals, and future plans, while staff bios humanise your brand and foster trust. The Services or Product page should provide detailed information that educates and persuades visitors to engage with your business. A Blog or Updates section with regularly refreshed content, such as reviews, FAQs, and customer interactions, keeps the site dynamic and encourages return visits. Finally, an accessible Contact page reassures customers by addressing queries, concerns, and feedback, reinforcing trust in your brand.

Step 4: Launch and maintain

Before launching properly check your website for broken links and mistakes. Ensure compatibility with various browsers and devices. Ensure that forms and interactive components work properly. Once satisfied with your website, publish it online and promote it through social media, email marketing, and other channels. Keep monitoring its performance using tools like Google Analytics. To ensure that your website runs well, update it with new content on a regular basis and check for any necessary software upgrades or security patches. By following these steps, you will have a website that not only satisfies your objectives, but also provides an excellent user experience for your target audience.





Interview with Norman Weber

Silhouette interviews Chief Executive Officer, Norman Weber about the work of the Island Conservation Society (ICS) of Seychelles.



Q: What is the Island Conservation Society?

A: The Island Conservation Society (ICS) was created in 2001 under the Registration of Associations Act 1959 (now the Associations Act 2022). It is a not-for-profit conservation NGO which is the lease owner of the granitic island of Aride, north of the island of Praslin and the operation and management of conservation centres on the islands/atolls of Silhouette, Platte, Desroches, Alphonse, Farquhar and Astove.

Q: What do you think, was the reason for creating ICS?

A: Back in 2001, apart from the world heritage sites of Aldabra and the Vallée de Mai on Praslin, there had never been any sustained conservation efforts on the outer islands. Many of these islands had been heavily exploited for their considerable fauna (sea turtles, fish, molluscs, marine mammals, birds, bird eggs), flora (mangroves, coconuts, timber), and guano, (a rich source of phosphates and natural fertiliser), leaving as a result heavily degraded islands, often abandoned and barren. With the arrival of tourism as a new industry providing far greater potential for economic growth and prosperity, it was becoming clear that the environment had far greater economic potential when protected, nurtured and cherished.

Q: Who are the stakeholders of ICS?

A: ICS was created by a small group of ordinary, but visionary individuals having a love for our natural environment and a common bond to protect the fragile ecosystems of our outer islands. Shortly after ICS was created, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Islands Development Company (IDC), a Seychelles government-owned company entrusted with the management of the outer islands, and the Government Ministry responsible for Environment. This established a long-term basis for cooperation, a Public-Private Partnership to conserve, restore and enhance island ecosystems and their associated marine environment.

Q: How does ICS overcome funding difficulties?

A: Funding of conservation efforts is, more often than not, a major challenge and the continuous lack of financial resources is the leading reason why conservation efforts fail. ICS has never received operating funding from the national government to this day. However, we developed a unique partnership and funding model by registering a number of associations as NGO's, called Foundations, with representatives on their boards being drawn from the private and public sector alike, including tourism investors in the islands, other NGO's, the Ministry responsible for Environment and IDC. The driving force of these foundations is conservation, with funding deriving from responsible low-impact ecotourism on the islands. Endowment funds have been established to pay for environmental work on each island, with money coming from a conservation levy on guests, landing fees from visitors, environmental tours and donations. Under this model, businessmen, scientists and government representatives are brought together to contribute their expertise towards achieving common goals. In 2012, at an international forum convened in South Africa, this ICS model for the outer islands with focus on conservation was described as 'exemplary'.

Q: And Aride island?

A: Aride island has its own very special history. Depicted by nineteenth century botanical artist Marianne North, and visited by botanist and zoologist Edward Percival Wright, for whom endemic species of fauna and fauna are named, the name Aride is French for 'barren'. Purchased from its previous owners as a rundown economically non-viable privatelyowned island, by Christopher Cadbury (of chocolate fame), turned into a nature reserve and donated to the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) of UK, it is now the largest restored nature reserve of the granitic island group, protected under law as a Special Nature Reserve. One year after the birth of ICS, its Founding Chairman, convinced the RSWT of UK to transfer the management of the Aride Special Nature Reserve to ICS. Aride island is now leased in perpetuity to ICS from its ultimate owners, ICS(UK) a registered UK charity, with a moderate endowment, allowing it to contribute partial funding towards Aride's operational and capital costs, with the balance being raised from visitor permits to the island, project-tied and general donations.















Q: What does ICS do on Aride and the islands under its management?

A: ICS is a science-based conservation organisation and its principle role is conservation management. ICS develops for each foundation, an annual conservation management plan, and our conservation teams on Aride and the islands, manage, implement and report on these plans. This implies the continual monitoring of species, data collection and data management to better understand the needs of conservation. Conservation however does not mean preservation but instead a deeper understanding of unique ecosystems, and the interdependent role of species within them. ICS employs qualified conservationists often with undergraduate and postgraduate specialisations in ornithology, ecology, marine biology, environmental science and so on, to do this work. In addition, subject to availability of funding, we undertake specific scientific study of species and ecosystems, in collaboration with universities and institutions of

higher learning locally and abroad, and often on behalf of the national government and often peer-reviewed and published.

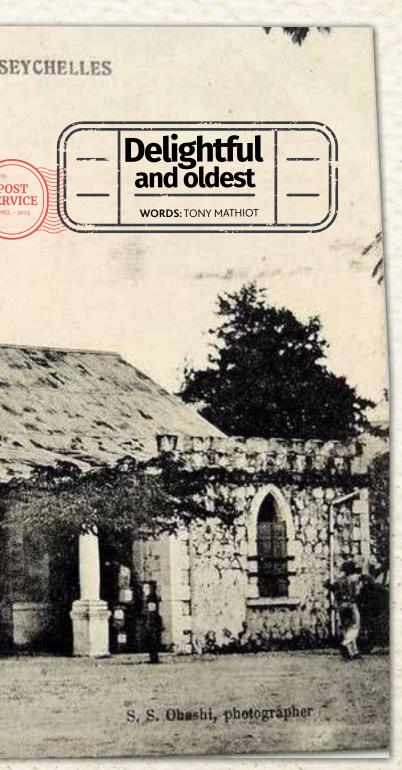
Q: How many staff does ICS employ?

A: The current establishment is of 34 staff of which 24 are field staff who live and work on Aride and the islands. Conservations oversight and administrative support is provided by our team of 10 staff at head office, while governance of ICS is provided by a Board of Trustees of 9 members each with specialisations in various fields, from ornithology, entomology, and marine biology to legal and financial, with the assistance of honorary trustees made up of highly qualified environmental specialists. Governance of each of the foundations is provided by separately elected trustees representing the interests of the Ministry responsible for environment.

To learn more about ICS visit $\underline{www.islandconservations eychelles.com}$ and/or $\underline{www.arideisland.com}$



It was in 1893 that the first local Post Office was introduced in Seychelles.



or a long time, the Post Office of Victoria served as the primary link between Seychelles and the rest of the world. Let's take a nostalgic look at the early days of this delightful and oldest of social enterprises.

Long before Seychelles had a market (1869), a hospital (1875), a bank (1887), telegraphic links (1893), or a library (1907), postal services were regarded as critical to the socioeconomic development of our islands, which were then a British protectorate and controlled as part of Mauritius. Interestingly, a post office was created in Mauritius in Port-Louis on 21 December 1772, the same year that Pierre Poivre introduced cinnamon to the Seychelles.

A jetty was built in 1845, and aside from the occasional steamer ship passing through our archipelago, Seychelles was largely isolated due to its location away from major commerce routes. In the 1850s, civil commissioner George Thompson Wade persuaded the Governor of Mauritius of the urgent need for a post office on Mahé.

Thus, on 11 December 1861, the first post office in Seychelles opened. Unfortunately, it was not Commissioner Wade who inaugurated it because he died in September, but the district magistrate, Cyprien Dupuy, who had been appointed acting civil commissioner.

The post office, which was a modest building of limestone and timber, was established at a time when our country was in the throes of social ferment and religious faith. The population was just above 7,000 inhabitants (whereas that of Mauritius was 300,000), most of whom earned their livelihood as fishermen or as labourers on coconut and cotton plantations.

In 1861, the militant participation of missionaries in the setting up of schools and the construction of churches and chapels required an inordinate amount of epistolary exchanges between Seychelles and Mauritius, which by then had 16 district post offices. So obviously the post office was considered to be indispensable. The postal receipts for that year amounted to £9 9s 10d.

With the opening of the first hotel, Victoria in 1868 followed by two more, *Phoenix* and *Princess*, visitors started arriving to discover our little township of Victoria with its quaint wood dwellings and a conspicuous absence of shops (it's not until 1875 that Indian and Chinese merchants began to arrive). The few 'business ventures' that existed then were a watchmaker, two auctioneers, an attorney at law's office, two jewellers and, of course, a post office!

It is safe to assume that in the 1870s few inhabitants could wield a pen, or rather a quill, besides the literate French property owners. So, the main bulk of mail that the post office had to deal with consisted of monthly dispatches sent from the civil commissioner to the secretary of the colonies in England.



CE



Made by the English firm De la Rue, the stamps were of eight different values, ranging from 2 cents to 96 cents.

A regular 'paquebot' (steamship) service between Suez, Seychelles, Reunion and Mauritius guaranteed that official communication was maintained on a periodic basis. At that time, the postmaster was the clerk of the customs office.

In 1884, the Seychelles post office became autonomous from Mauritius regarding the management of its finances and the accountability of its revenues – although of course, we were still using Mauritian stamps and Mauritian currency (which was the Indian rupee). The population had by then reached 14,035, with that of Mahé alone being 11,393. The chief commissioner was Arthur Cecil Barkly and it was during the year that he died (1890), on 5 April, that the first Seychelles' stamps were issued.

Made by the English firm *De la Rue*, the stamps were of eight different values, ranging from 2 cents to 96 cents, and had the head of Queen Victoria as the centerpiece. In May of the same year the first parcel post service came into operation. At last, some fortunate inhabitants who had relatives abroad could receive, albeit once in a blue moon, a parcel of precious contents (toilet soaps, Brooke Bond tea, candy, a book...) well, in those days anything was something!

Parcels and letters were loaded onto steamers of the Messageries
Maritimes Company which left Marseilles on the 25th of each month
calling at Aden, Diego Suarez and Tamatave on their way to Mauritius and
Seychelles, a journey that took 18 days both ways. In 1893, the post office
received 428 parcels and dispatched 219. And in that same year an inland
postal service went into operation but it was discontinued after nine

months with 553 letters being delivered. The salary of a postman was then Rs. 3/-.

In February of 1899 when the Hon Ernest Bickham Sweet-Escott was appointed administrator of the Seychelles, which was then on the brink of being separated from Mauritius to achieve dominion status, he made it his personal goal to revive and establish a permanent rural and inland postal service. In 1900, the population of Seychelles was 19,343. That year the post office, which by then had become a much bigger and dignified building, received 57,831 letters and dispatched 39,879. Today, we acknowledge the meticulousness of those colonial clerks!

By the end of 1901 the post office had opened branches at Anse Royale, Anse Boileau, Cascade, Takamaka, and even on Praslin and La Digue. For the sake of convenience, it was the police stations that already existed there that served as sub-post offices.

In 1903, the year that Seychelles became a separate colony and the administrator was given the title of Governor, and a clock tower was inaugurated near the post office. In 1903, the postmaster who was named Ferdinand Touris requisitioned 102,327 stamps of 3 cents. The new stamps of course featured the head of King Edward VII who had ascended to the British throne in 1901. In May of that year, hundreds of Queen Victoria stamps were destroyed by the Treasury Committee – 'standard procedure' of British colonies. This act of philatelic blasphemy was repeated on 31 December 1935 when many unsold stamps that had been issued for the silver jubilee commemoration of King George V on 6 May 1935 were disposed of.

If figures from our postal history are any indication of our gradual social development over the decades of the 20th century then surely our post office speaks volume about our unremitting progress and the changing times in general.

On 22 March 1938, the first 'airmail' from Seychelles left via Africa, being taken by steamboat to Karachi to connect with the services operated there by Imperial Airways. A 'flying boat' named 'Centurion' took the mail to Europe.

This was a milestone in the postal history of the Seychelles. During that year pictorial stamps were issued for the first time depicting the tortoise, the pirogue and the coco-de-mer. In 1944, another 'flying boat' named *Golden Hind* carried our precious letters and parcels to Durban when the amphibian plane came for its fortnightly refueling stopover. Aerogrammes became fashionable. By that time the Post Office facility had been incorporated into the new stone building called Queen's Building which also housed the income Tax and Treasury Departments. The building was re-named Liberty Building in 1977.

After a while the *Golden Hind* stopped coming and the post office had to rely solely on vessels of the British India Steam Navigation Company and Steamers of the Dutch Mail line to dispatch mail to Mombasa and Bombay. These boats of course took away not only our mail but also tonnes of our agricultural produce, such as copra, cinnamon and vanilla.

On 14 January 1953, a Catalina amphibian aircraft operated by East African Airways arrived for a first and only visit. She left with three bags of mail to Nairobi. It was a little over a decade later in 1964 that a PanAm Grumman Albatross amphibious aircraft began a weekly service between Seychelles and Kenya. The aircraft was operated by the recently-completed U.S. Satellite Tracking Station and used to bring in supplies and technicians and also carried mail between Mombasa and Victoria, free of charge.

On 2 May 1970, another milestone was achieved when the first air-fare paying visitors to Seychelles arrived from Mombasa aboard a twin-engine Piper Navajo aircraft operated by Wilkenair (renamed Air Kenya in 1971). This heralded the start of a new airmail service, using part of the partially completed runway at the International Airport.

Meanwhile, inhabitants of Praslin and La Digue had to rely on boats for their mail service, but times change and we evolve. In May 1981, Air Mahé began the first inter-island airmail service between Mahé and Praslin. A happy event for all islanders!

Our beloved Post Office has had its share of mishaps and, well, mischief! Like when it ran out of stamps. In July 1976, the 'Union Jack' had barely been folded away for good when all stamps bearing Queen Elizabeth's head had been sold out. It seemed that fanatic philatelists had bought all the stamps. And probably those same philatelists also grabbed all the Commemorative stamps of Independence Day!

Consequently, for a while letters had to be franked. And it was in July also that Rs. 208,000 of postal orders were stolen. A window of the



Now, our Post Office has been renovated and refurbished.

post office was broken and the safe opened. Outside the building, a blue bag containing various denominations of sterling postal orders for a total value of Rs.158,000 was found. Apparently, the burglar had taken more than he could carry!

Now, our Post Office has been renovated and refurbished. Yes, times change and we evolve. Today, we enjoy the attraction and convenience of ultra-modern communications technology. We have the internet and cellular phone. They have become indispensable aspects of our 21st century civilisation. We love our 'SMS' our 'cable voice mail', our 'MMS'... the whole caboodle. Nevertheless, our Post Office will remain a cherished feature of our town because, in the midst of all this mindboggling digital technology, a letter – yes, a letter – has become a luxury.

The Seychelles Postal Services (SPS) in close collaboration with the Seychelles Revenue Commission opened a new Post Office branch in 2020 on the ground floor of Victoria House building in Victoria, mainly for the clearing and delivery of parcels / packets. Other services provided include bill payments, e-top facilities, and purchase of parking coupons.

The new branch is supplementary to the existing SPS Central Office located at Liberty House and provides ample space for the increasing flow of online orders.

Information sources: Seychelles National Archives

Tavern of the Seas

WORDS: LISA MARK

wenty-four hours after South Africa's famed Blue Train leaves the administrative city of Pretoria, 23 hours after it departs
Johannesburg, something quite miraculous happens. After a day and a night of slicing through the brown, dusty diamond and gold-bearing land of southern Africa, from the western Transvaal through the velt of the Orange Free State into the arid Karoo of the Cape Province, the elegant carriages move through a long tunnel and emerge into a soft, green, rolling, flowered realm more European than African.



The Blue Train, new era of luxury travel. The train runs between Pretoria and Cape Town.



The majestic Table Mountain offers many hikes and magnificent views.

Most of the passengers are crowded in the corridors, the old hands having warned the neophytes over breakfast of the splendours of the final hour of the journey. The contrast to the largely drought-parched and monotonous terrain that has passed before is dramatic. Proud South Africans puff their chests and nod knowingly as visitors crane their necks and point their cameras. From carriage speakers comes the announcement that the train is nearing 'South Africa's Mother City'.

More so than with almost any other city worldwide, Cape Town's reputation precedes it. Californians don't tell you to 'have a nice day' nearly as often as South Africans advise you earnestly that Cape Town is 'a wonderful city'. The message is proclaimed internationally, and has been since the 16th century, when Sir Francis Drake described the Cape Peninsula as 'the fairest cape we saw in the whole circumference of the earth'. Like Venice, Cape Town converts.

It is not hard to appreciate just how enticing the Cape of Good Hope, which would come to mark the separation of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans, must have been to the weary crews of merchant ships battling fierce storms and unreliably charted waters. Not only was there friendly hospitality at this 'Tavern of the Seas' but fresh water and vegetables and as soothing an environment as many had ever sighted; all beneath the imposing Table Mountain with its oft-present cloud cover, 'the tablecloth'.

A thousand-metres-high sandstone plateau, flanked by Lion's Head to the west and Devil's Peak to the east, Table Mountain can be seen from 100 kilometres away as a great smoky, grey-blue shadow. This brooding, commanding presence draws the eye like a hypnotist's watch chain as it generates its own unique weather effects and colourings.

Nowhere is this more evident than at the Waterfront, the most ambitious restoration project ever undertaken in the country. A working harbour for





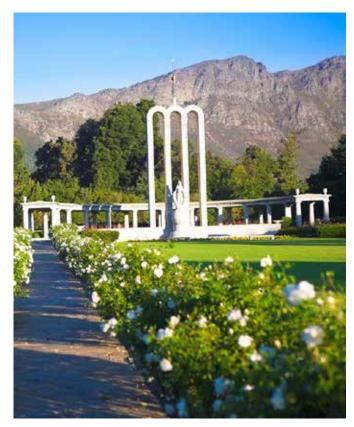


The V&A (Victoria & Alfred) Waterfront.

hundreds of years, this area was physically isolated from its city until 1989, when the Ferryman's Tavern and Waterfront Brewery opened for business in a grey stone warehouse dating back to 1870. This was the beginning of a \$100 million refurbishment project designed to establish The Waterfront as a tourist attraction along the lines of San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf and Sydney's Darling Harbour. Within months more doors opened Bertie's Landing, Quay Four, the Dock Road Cafe and Theatre, the South African Maritime Museum and the imposing and elegant Victoria & Alfred Hotel (Alfred was the old British Queen's eldest son).

The Waterfront in Cape Town, officially known as the V&A Waterfront, is a bustling metropolis located between the majestic Table Mountain and the Atlantic Ocean. Within a few years, a slew of construction contracts were underway in an area of one and a half hectares, as residents and

visitors alike flocked to the Waterfront to eat, drink, shop, listen to jazz, see theatre, buy fresh seafood, soak up the historical atmosphere, and participate in the life of a still-functioning harbour. Visitors can explore the Two Oceans Aquarium, take a harbour boat, or experience breathtaking views from the Cape Wheel. With its rich history, dynamic environment, and closeness to monuments such as Robben Island, the Waterfront is a must-see site for anybody experiencing the charm of Cape Town. Added to the flower sellers of Trafalgar Place, the busy flea markets of Greenmarket Square, the cable car to the top of Table Mountain, the wrought iron-graced Victorian buildings of Long Street, the 350-year-old Company's Garden and Bell Tower, the Dutch East India Company slave lodge converted to a Cultural History Museum, and the Malay Quarter with its cobbled streets, mosques and flat-roofed pastel shaded houses, it makes Cape Town a truly captivating city.



Huguenot monument erected in 1938.

Yet, for all its attractions, Cape Town is a beginning – a stepping-off point for the Cape Peninsula region. South and east of the city are the towns, bays, points, nature reserves, valleys, vineyards, settlements and communities which make the Cape Province the most desirable and engaging segment of South Africa. After the novelty of Table Mountain wears off, most visitors head off in either direction.

To the east are the cool valleys, rolling hills and chocolate box villages where photographers almost faint. Stellenbosch, the second oldest town in South Africa, founded by Commander Simon van der Stel in 1679 on the banks of the Eerste River, sometimes looks as if it were painted rather than built. White steepled churches, intensely green fields of grain and rising mountain slopes provide an almost enveloping ambience for those who come to travel the Wine Route – the 19 private cellars, five co-operative wineries and 260 individual wineries open and available within a 12 kilometres radius.

A further half-hour drive beyond is Franschhoek in the Valley of the Huguenots, the origins of which date back to 1688, when French Huguenot emigrés fled France to escape religious persecution. Granted land in the valley then known as Oliphantshoek (Elephant's Corner) the settlers stamped their Gallic identity so strongly on the area that it was renamed Franschhoek (French Corner). They established vineyards and transplanted a three-century-old wine-producing tradition. In time, they fused the scenic grandeur of the Cape with the cultural and gastronomic heritage of France and the world beat a path to their collective door.



Stellenbosch vineyards, one of the biggest tourist attractions in the Western Cape.



Fish Hoek beach

A Huguenot Monument was erected in 1938 and in 1967 a proper Huguenot Memorial Museum was opened.

To the south of Cape Town are the fishing towns, sea ports, beaches, Dutch forts, observatories, mills, gardens, exclusive residences, institutes of learning, shipwrecks and spectacular vantage points which were discovered or established as the Cape of Good Hope was visited and utilised by early explorers and settlers.

The lower third of the Cape, some 40 kilometre of coastline, is devoted to the Cape of Good Hope Nature Reserve, a wild and wind-scoured plateau which accommodates antelope, baboons, richly abundant bird life and more indigenous plant species than any other place on earth.





At its geographical climax is a 20 million candle-power lighthouse on Vasco de Gama Peak warning shipping away from the treacherous Bellows Rocks and Dias Rocks, where the Portuguese vessel Lusitania went aground in 1911.

This reserve, touted erroneously as 'the bottom of Africa', is a logical goal of any journey down the Cape but is no more rewarding than a drive, between August and November, along the 'Whale Route'. The thousand square kilometres False Bay, the protected ocean area between the elongated Cape and the mainland, is alive every autumn and spring with the breaching, lobtailing, skyhopping, blowing and grunting of Southern Right, Humpback, Bryde's and occasionally Killer whales.



Vasco de Gama Peak and Cape Point trail.

Table Mountain, Camps Bay, Stellenbosch, Franschhoek, Fish Hoek, Hout Bay and the Cape Reserve are all part of the Cape Town presented in tourist brochures and are clearly signposted for the visitor's easy access. But, as is the case in every other part of South Africa, there is another Cape Town, the Cape Town you have always had to either specifically ask to be taken to or actively seek out on your own: the Kaapstad of well-established black cities such as Crossroads and of the far less established (but no less expansive) 'townships' and squatter camps such as Khayelistsha, Crossroads, Mitchell's Plain, Elsieriver and Nyanga.

Although they are hardly designated as tourist areas and can, at times of friction and upheaval, be dangerous for residents and outsiders alike, these booming population centres have an exceptional energy and vitality that is missing from the rather more sedate parts of the Cape Peninsula. As even the most hesitant visitors soon discover, they ring with the sounds of laughter, excitement and enterprise. To visit a township kindergarten is to become truly entranced by unrestrained joy – theirs and yours.

There are so many dimensions to the Cape region – both obvious and beneath-the-surface – that it asserts itself as an African destination as important as the Nile or Victoria Falls.



Air Seychelles operates flights between Seychelles and Johannesburg, 3 times a week. Visit: www.airseychelles.com for more information



Kuredu Island Resort, located in the heart of the Lhaviyani Atoll.



aldives, an archipelago of over 1,000 coral islands scattered across the Indian Ocean, is synonymous with luxury, natural beauty, and tranquillity. Its pristine white-sand beaches, crystal-clear waters, and vibrant coral reefs have made it a dream destination for travellers worldwide. The undersea environment is a major attraction, with vibrant coral reefs filled with marine life. Diving and snorkelling are popular activities where visitors can see manta rays, sea turtles, and a variety of rare species. For those who choose not to dive, glass-bottom boat trips provide an equally fascinating sight into the ocean's depths.

Cultural discovery is also part of the Maldivian experience. Malé, the main city, shows the islands' rich legacy with buildings such as the 17th-century Hukuru Miskiy (Friday Mosque) and lively local markets selling fresh vegetables and handicrafts.

Sustainability is gaining traction in the Maldives, with eco-friendly resorts and marine conservation projects aimed at safeguarding the fragile environment. Visitors are asked to practise responsible tourism to help preserve this gem for future generations.

Kuredu Island Resort, located in the heart of the Lhaviyani Atoll, has taken significant steps to address these challenges by implementing various conservation programmes and activities to preserve the island's delicate environment. It is known for its marine conservation activities and the island's programmes are aimed at safeguarding beautiful coral reefs, protecting marine life, and fostering sustainable tourism. It collaborates with marine biologists and environmental organisations to conduct coral restoration initiatives and educate visitors about reef ecology. The island is a sanctuary for sea turtles, rays, and colourful reef fish, with rules in place to ensure responsible snorkelling and diving. These conservation initiatives are intended to preserve Kuredu's undersea treasures for future generations.



To protect this natural heritage, the resort with marine biologists and environmental organisations spearheads the following initiatives:

Coral reef restoration

The resort has constructed coral nurseries to restore damaged reef regions. Tourists are invited to participate in coral planting programmes, learn about coral ecology, and contribute directly to reef restoration. Regular surveys are carried out to track fish numbers, coral health, and other indications of reef vitality. The information gathered is shared with national and international agencies to aid global marine conservation initiatives.

Kuredu turtle conservation is carried out with the Olive Ridley Project to safeguard sea turtles. The island's nesting locations are monitored to ensure the hatchlings' protection. Guests are encouraged to attend informative sessions about turtle conservation and, if feasible, participate in turtle releases.

Waste management initiatives

Kuredu Island Resort in the Maldives has introduced unique waste management programmes to improve sustainability. The island follows a zero-waste strategy, recycling and reusing resources whenever possible. A dedicated glass crusher converts discarded bottles into construction material, and composting facilities use organic waste to replenish the island's vegetation. Single-use plastics are minimised, and guests are urged to practice eco-friendly habits during their stay. These projects demonstrate Kuredu's dedication to conserving its pristine environment and supporting the Maldives' overall sustainability goals by introducing innovative waste management methods to reduce its environmental imprint.



Olive Ridley Project to safeguard sea turtles.



Kuredu Island Resort is an innovator in renewable energy and sustainable techniques.

The resort operates a trash segregation facility where plastic, glass, and metal are processed and recycled. Organic waste is composted on-site, producing nutrient-rich soil for the resort's garden. Plastic straws and bottles have been replaced with biodegradable or reusable options. Guests are given refillable water bottles, and water refill facilities are conveniently positioned across the island.

Renewable energy and sustainability practices

Kuredu Island Resort in the Maldives is an innovator in renewable energy and sustainable techniques. Kuredu's environmental policy includes attempts to manage waste, protect coral reefs, and promote ecofriendly visitor practices. These measures show the resort's commitment to maintaining the Maldives' natural beauty while also encouraging responsible tourism.

Kuredu Island Resort is dedicated to minimising its reliance on fossil fuels through investments in renewable energy. The island uses solar energy through a large number of solar panels, considerably lowering its carbon impact. The resort makes extensive use of energy-saving appliances and LED lights. Air conditioning systems are designed to be as energy



Kuredu Island Resort has made a significant effort to eventually eliminate the plastic bottles.

efficient as possible. Water desalination facilities produce fresh water in a sustainable manner, while energy-efficient devices reduce electricity use. Water-saving fixtures are fitted in guestrooms and public areas.

Community engagement

Kuredu Island Resort actively supports the local community through meaningful participation and projects. The resort works with adjacent islands to provide education, vocational training, and employment possibilities for people, allowing them to profit from sustainable tourism. Community outreach programmes emphasise marine conservation awareness, cultural preservation, and health efforts. Kuredu promotes economic growth while strengthening relationships with the Maldivian population, creating a beneficial and long-term impact that extends beyond the resort.

Local schools are invited to participate in environmental awareness programmes led by the resort's marine scientists. Workshops are held to educate sustainable methods like garbage management and coral preservation. The resort buys seafood from local fishermen who practise sustainable fishing methods and the partnerships with the local community foster environmentally friendly livelihoods.

Guest involvement

Guests at Kuredu Island Resort are invited to actively participate in conservation activities. They can participate in marine life monitoring activities, such as turtle watching and coral reef restoration initiatives. The resort provides educational programmes and guided tours that focus on local species and the necessity of protecting coastal ecosystems.

Guests are also encouraged to embrace environmentally beneficial activities, such as reducing plastic consumption and supporting sustainability efforts. Kuredu emphasises responsible tourism and fosters a stronger connection to environment by including guests in these initiatives. Guests are invited to join eco-tours and activities. Guided snorkelling expeditions allow them to explore the marine environment while learning about its protection, and beach clean-ups are held on a regular basis, with guests encouraged to participate. They can participate in workshops on coral reef ecology, turtle protection, and sustainable living practices, or they can sponsor a coral fragment that is planted in the resort's coral nursery. Sponsors receive regular updates on the growth and progress of their corals.

Kuredu's conservation projects are an example of sustainable tourism in the Maldives. By focussing on environmental protection, trash reduction, and community engagement, the resort ensures that its pristine surroundings will be enjoyed for decades to come. Guests who visit Kuredu Island Resort not only enjoy the natural beauty of the Maldives, but also help to safeguard this endangered ecosystem by participating in these programmes.



Air Seychelles operates flights between Seychelles and Colombo, 2 times a week, with connections to Maldives with Sri Lankan Airlines. Visit: www.airseychelles.com for more information



View of Colombo, Sri Lanka's main city.

separate world lives in the busy metropolis of Colombo, where the buzz of traffic and the chatter of merchants dominate the rhythm of life. This is the realm of Colombo's wildlife, an underappreciated but thriving element of the city's tapestry. The next time you visit Colombo, take a moment to gaze beyond

The urban jungle

journey.

the buildings and congested streets. You might be rewarded with a wildlife encounter that adds a magical element to your urban

Sri Lanka's main city, Colombo, is more than simply concrete and glass. It's a city where nature and urban life coexist in unexpected ways. A variety of species can be seen in the city's parks, lakes, and even individuals' backyards.

Urban journey

WORDS: MAMBO GICHUKI





The Sri Lankan elephant Elephas maximus maximus.

The majestic elephants

One of the most memorable experiences is with majestic elephants. Although elephants are more typically associated with the country's national parks, they do occasionally appear on the outskirts of Colombo. These gentle giants, renowned in Sri Lankan culture, frequently create a path of amazement and surprise as they move through the suburban landscapes.

The Sri Lankan elephant *Elephas maximus maximus* is a native of Sri Lanka and one of three Asian elephant subspecies. Carl Linnaeus initially described Elephas maximus, the type subspecies of the Asian elephant, in 1758. Sri Lanka's elephant population is now largely constrained to the dry zone in the country's north, east, and southeast. Elephants can be found in Udawalawe, Yala, Lunugamvehera, Wilpattu, and Minneriya National Parks, although they also reside outside of protected areas. It is estimated that Sri Lanka has the highest elephant density in Asia. Human-elephant conflict is increasing as elephant habitat is converted into towns and permanent crops.

Elephants were a prevalent feature in Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamil heraldry for over two millennia, and they remained so during the British colonial administration. From 1875 to 1948, the Ceylon Government's coat of arms and flag included an elephant, and many institutions continued to utilise the Sri Lankan elephant in their coats of arms and insignia. For almost two thousand years, there has been a significant cultural symbiosis between elephants and humans; no religious procession was complete without an elephant entourage, and many prominent Buddhist and Hindu temples in Sri Lanka had their own elephants.

Tusker with the longest tusks

Millangoda Raja, commonly referred to as Millangoda Tusker was over 9 feet tall with 7.5 feet long tusks, one of the longest tusked captive Asian elephant.

Elephants have been domesticated in Sri Lanka for centuries as work and war elephants by ancient monarchs. Elephants were sold from the island for hundreds of years, including during the Portuguese and Dutch colonial times. The British did not export elephants; instead, they hunted wild elephants and captured them for domestication as work elephants continued. Elephant kraals were organised to capture big herds of elephants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The capture of wild elephants was supervised by the 1937 Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance, which gave permits for wild elephant capture. Sir Francis Molamure's final Elephant Kraal in 1950 put an end to this practice. In 1970, a census of the domesticated elephant population revealed 532 elephants among 378 owners, but by 1982, the figure had dropped to 344. The last census was in 1997 and 214 elephants were recorded. These domesticated elephants were mostly used as work elephants and in cultural pageants, the most famous of which was the annual Kandy Esala Perahera. Domesticated elephant populations have plummeted further in recent years as demand for their labour has reduced due to increased tractor use.

However, they continue to be utilised for logging and tourism in areas inaccessible to automobiles. Elephant ownership is highly regarded as a prestige symbol among Singhalese, and appeals have been made for permission to capture wild elephants or for orphaned wild elephants in government care to be released to temples for participation in pageants. Captive breeding in private ownership is not practised due to the lengthy time of unemployment associated with it.

Legal improvements for the captive elephant population were implemented in 2021, just as a historic case involving hundreds of calves being stolen from their herds over a ten-year period failed, with the Attorney General's Department dropping charges and releasing the elephants to their previous owners.



Tusker with the longest tusks.



Brahminy kite

Birdwatcher's paradise

Colombo is also an excellent spot for birdwatching. Wetlands in the city, such as Beddagana Wetland Park, are home to a variety of bird species, including purple herons, kingfishers, and cormorants. The bird diversity of Colombo is spectacular, with dazzling kingfishers and elusive herons as well as majestic Brahminy kites flying overhead. Colombo's proximity to the seaside makes it an ideal habitat for shorebirds. Whether you're an experienced birder or a casual watcher, Colombo's natural spaces offer a peaceful respite and an opportunity to reconnect with nature.



Toque Macaque

Monkeys and mongooses

Monkeys and mongooses thrive amid Colombo's urban vegetation. The Toque Macaque, a native monkey species, is frequently spotted in the city's parks and suburbs, foraging or hanging among trees. Mongooses, particularly the Indian Grey Mongoose, are elusive, yet they can be seen scurrying through gardens and open spaces in quest of food. These species adapt exceptionally well to urban situations, providing a peek of Sri Lanka's tremendous biodiversity in the heart of the city.

Reptilian encounters

Colombo's marshes, parks, and gardens are home to a diverse range of reptiles, combining urban life with biodiversity. Commonly visible species include water monitors sunning along the tranquil Beira Lake or canals, as well as garden lizards sitting on trees or walls. The city's wetlands, such as Diyasaru and Beddagana, are home to snakes such as the non-venomous rat snake and, on occasion, the shy cobra. Geckos can be found anywhere, including in homes and gardens. These reptiles serve an important role in keeping Colombo's ecosystem balanced, coexisting peacefully with the city's human residents.

Nighttime wonders

As night strikes, Colombo's urban landscape becomes alive with nocturnal fauna. Flying foxes, often known as fruit bats, glide through the night sky, munching on fruits and nectar. Civet cats and bandicoots are elusive creatures that prowl quiet alleys and gardens looking for food. Wetland habitats support species such as the Indian nightjar, whose eerie calls reverberate throughout the dark. Geckos and frogs become active, feeding on insects drawn to light. The spooky sounds of the night heron and the quick flutter of bat wings overhead remind us of the hidden world that emerges after dark. Colombo's nocturnal population highlight the hidden biodiversity that thrives during the city's calm nighttime hours.



Conservation efforts

Despite the challenges posed by urbanization, conservation efforts are underway to protect and preserve Colombo's wildlife. Organisations and local communities are working together to create awareness and implement measures to safeguard the natural habitats within the city. Wetland parks like Diyasaru and Beddagana have been established to protect vital ecosystems and their biodiversity. These areas serve as safe havens for numerous birds, reptile, and mammal species while offering eco-tourism opportunities. Community initiatives and awareness campaigns, such as tree-planting drives and clean-up projects, aim to preserve green spaces and combat pollution. The city's conservation efforts not only protect wildlife but also enhance urban resilience against climate change, ensuring a sustainable future for Colombo and its inhabitants.



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A weekend in Beijing

WORDS: MARK YUANCHANG



hina's bustling capital city is a vibrant metropolis of ancient neighbourhoods and perfectly manicured districts, where much of the old has been razed to make way for the blingy new. Impeccably dressed Chinese women shop the afternoons away at gleaming new malls, young tycoons and celebrities park their Ferraris on the pristine sidewalks, and everyone who's anyone congregates at the booming nightclubs filled with hip-hop music and VIP bottle service.

Beijing, the vast and utterly fascinating Chinese capital, has delighted and intrigued visitors from home and abroad for centuries and is quite simply the yardstick by which other cities must be judged. The city's unique charms and rich cultural heritage include an abundance of amazing architectural wonders, historical treasures, mouth-watering cuisine, pulsating nightlife and much, much more. So what are you waiting for? Let your journey begin here...



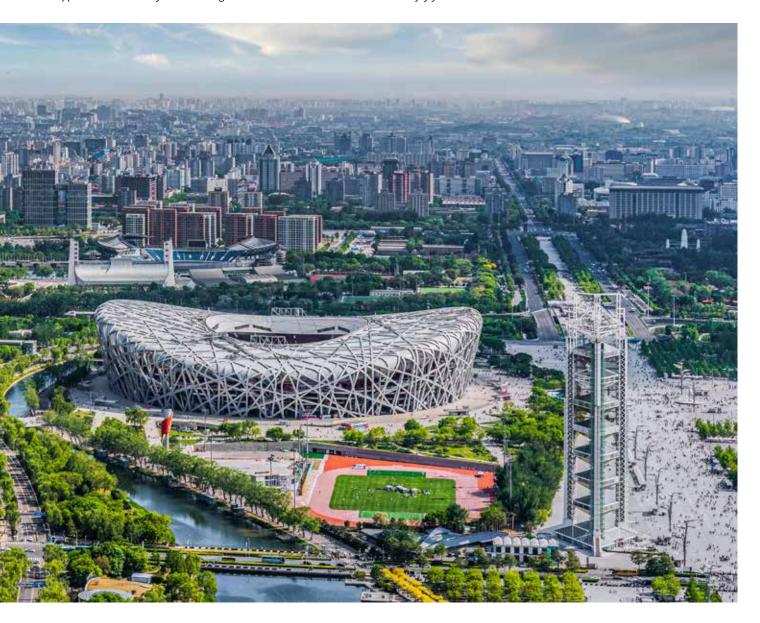
Skyline of Beijing's central business district with The Beijing National Stadium (Bird's nest) and the Beitou Olympic Park.

The early morning is a perfect time to observe Beijing's local life. Start your day with the Beijinger's typical breakfast, with various staples, noodles, wheaten food and desserts. You can also buy a delicious *jianbingguozi*, a so-called Chinese Hamburger with spongy egg crepe on the thin pancake, wrapped around a *youtiao*, from a food stall at the roadside. Then, start to enjoy your day exploring the city.

Beijingers love to do exercise during the early morning and many of them rate the Temple of Heaven as their favourite park and each visit will throw up something new to admire. It is at its most enigmatic early in the morning, when elderly people congregate near the eastern entrance to practice tai chi, sing operas, or play shuttlecocks. If you are interested in the various activities, you will be welcome to join in. Then, after a suitable rest, it's time to start the amazing journey to the Temple of Heaven, and appreciate the intricacy of its buildings.

Take the Metro to Tiananmen Square, with its famous pedestrian plaza and the site of Mao Zedong's mausoleum. The square is usually crammed with provincial tourists marvelling at the size and scale of the world's largest public square. Head to the renovated National Museum of China nearby – entry is free, but passports need to be shown – which displays a huge array of national treasures and a plethora of precious rarities spanning thousands of years.

When lunchtime arrives, sample a Beijing icon – roast duck – at the renowned Quanjude Restaurant near the Shichahai. There is simply nothing quite like a perfectly roasted duck with bronzed crispy skin and tender, succulent meat that almost instantly melts over your tongue in a wash of sweet, savoury, smoky duck fat. Peel apart a single pancake and wrap it around three small slices of duck with sauce and shallots. Enjoy your feast!





Three Stones Kite Store, famous for exquisite handmade kites located north of Beihai Park.

Located on the southwest corner of beautiful Shichahai, Prince Kung's Mansion is the largest and best-preserved imperial residence of the Qing Dynasty, which was first used as the private residence of He Shen, an influential minister of Emperor Qianlong. With its splendid halls, winding corridors and pavilions, piled rockeries and delicate natural landscapes, this fine example of ancient Chinese architecture and culture is well worth your time, and gives a good insight into the idyllic lifestyle of ancient China's upper classes.

Take a 10-minute stroll to the Three Stones Kite Store, located in the north of Beihai Park. This shop, which dates back more than 100 years, is filled with colourful, exquisite and traditional handmade kites that will make you feel like a child again. The kites are made out of bamboo, silk or paper, and painted by the owners themselves. And they will custom-make one for you if you desire something that flies a little higher and faster than your competitors.

Walking along the Di'anmen East Avenue, it will take you five minutes to arrive at the Nanluoguxiang where some of Beijing's best-preserved



Prince Kung's Mansion



Taikoo Li Sanlitun, a favourite of expatriates and hip locals.

hutongs and courtyards can be found. A perfect fusion of Oriental and Western cultures, this 800 metres long alley, dotted with numerous bars, snack shops, boutiques, craft shops, bookshops, cafes and tea houses, is highly popular with both locals and tourists. Try Wenyu Cheese Shop, Local Time, Plastered 8 T-Shirts, and Passby Bar.

What Guijie (or Ghost Street) presents is beyond the normal dining experience. It has become a microcosm of the nightlife and food culture in the capital Beijing. Spicy crayfish, roast fish and hot pot attract large numbers of people, especially the young. The bustling street is packed 24 hours a day.

Disembark at the Qianmen stop of Metro 2. Laoshe Tea House is a hot spot for both foreign tourists and local people. Spend just two hours here and you'll experience the authentic life of old Beijing: sipping cups of tea and munching on local snacks, while watching a revue of popular Chinese traditional performances such as Peking opera, acrobats, magicians, and face-switching.

Panjiayuan Antique Market is a worth-visiting venue for antique collectors. It nestles on the southern part of Third East Ring Road, southwest of the Panjiayuan Bridge. The best bargains are offered early on weekend mornings, between 6:00 and 8.30 a.m.

The 798 Art Zone, in the Dashanzi area to the northeast of central Beijing, once a collection of state-run factories, is now home to an amazing warren of cool art galleries and studios, stuffed with artworks and paintings. It has become a favourite stop on many tourist itineraries. Its open-air installations, affiliated eateries and bookshops make it a pleasant way to spend a whole day if you have the time.

Stroll around the galleries in this funky, Bauhaus-style complex – better than any museum – and perhaps pick up a piece of contemporary art to take home. Visit its website at www.798art.org for the latest news.

If you're up for a taste of Beijing nightlife, choose a quiet bar and relax; the best choice for a final evening has to be Sanlitun, which is far better than you'd imagine. With colourful neon lights, popular music played by live bands, and imported beers served in numerous bars, the vibrant atmosphere is guaranteed and remains fashionable with foreign travellers and younger locals.



Panjiayuan Antique Market, also known as The Dirt Market.

Some recommended places to visit



Quanjude Restaurant Shichahai BranchLotus Market, No. 57, West Street, Xicheng District

Opening Hours: 11:00 - 14:00, 17:00 - 21:00



Guijie

Dongzhimennei Street, Dongcheng District Bus: No. 106, 635, 24, 107, 117, 612, 635 Metro: Line 5. Line 2. Line 13



Laoshe Tea House

No. 3 Building, Zhengyang Market, Qianmen West Street, Xicheng District, Opening Hours: 14:00 - 22:00



Air Seychelles operates flights between Seychelles and Colombo, 2 times a week, with connections to Beijing with Sri Lankan Airlines. Visit: <u>www.airseychelles.com</u> for more information

A living volcanic wonder

WORDS: MAMBO GICHUKI

iton de la Fournaise (Peak of the Furnace), a shield volcano on La Réunion Island in the Indian Ocean, is one of the world's most active volcanoes. Its regular eruptions and breathtaking beauty has made it a popular geological and tourist destination, attracting researchers, nature lovers, and adventurers alike.

It is among the world's most active volcanoes, alongside *Kīlauea* in the Hawaiian Islands, Stromboli and Etna in Italy, and Mount *Erebus* in Antarctica. The previous eruption started in August 2006 and ended in January 2007. The volcano erupted again in February 2007, on 21 September 2008, 9 December 2010, lasting two days, and 1 August 2015. The most recent eruption started on 15 September 2022. The volcano is located in La Réunion National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.









Geographical and historical overview

Piton de la Fournaise reaches an astounding height of 2,632 metres (8,635 feet) above sea level. It is located on the eastern side of La Réunion, a French overseas territory, and is part of the broader La Réunion hotspot volcanic complex. This shield volcano is quite new in geological terms, having formed approximately 500,000 years ago. It has the same volcanic origins as the island, which rose from the depths of the Indian Ocean.

Piton de la Fournaise is a shield volcano with gentle slopes formed by the flow of very fluid basaltic lava. Unlike stratovolcanoes with explosive eruptions, this volcano is notable for its effusive eruptions, in which lava oozes gradually from fissures or vents. The caldera is ruptured to the southeast, towards the sea. The volcano's eastern flank is unstable and is beginning to fail. It will eventually collapse into the Indian Ocean, and if it is a cataclysmic debris avalanche, it will cause a massive tsunami.

Piton de la Fournaise is well-known for its frequent eruptions, with one occurring every nine months during the last few decades. These eruptions are often nonviolent, producing stunning lava flows that fall down its slopes, resulting in amazing natural spectacles.

The Observatoire Volcanologique du Piton de la Fournaise (OVPF), which was founded to investigate and predict volcanic eruptions, regularly

monitors the volcano's activity. Notable eruptions include those in 2007, 2010, and 2019, with some lasting several weeks and resulting in large lava flow expansions.

Dolomieu, a 400-metre (1,300-foot) high lava shield, is within the caldera. Bory Crater (Cratère Bory) and Dolomieu Crater (Cratère Dolomieu), the latter of which is significantly larger and named after French geologist Déodat Gratet de Dolomieu, are located near the summit of this lava shield.

Several craters and spatter cones can be found in the caldera and along the volcano's higher flanks. These vents usually emit lava with high iridium concentrations. A small prominent crater called Formica Leo, named from its resemblance to an antlion's sand pit trap, is found near the summit path trailhead.

Commerson Crater, located outside of the main caldera, is an inactive caldera that receives heavy rainfall, especially during tropical storms. During Cyclone Hyacinthe in January 1980, the area got 6,433 millimetres (253.3 inches) of rain in 15 days, the greatest precipitation produced by a tropical cyclone in a single place.

Despite its frequent activity, the volcano's eruptions pose little risk to nearby residents due to its remote location and the predictability of its lava flow routes.

The enchanting landscape

Piton de la Fournaise is surrounded by a vibrant and exotic scenery. The Enclos Fouqué, a large crater that surrounds the volcano's top, is an important feature. The caldera's bleak, moon-like appearance contrasts sharply with the lush greenery that covers the rest of La Réunion.

Visitors to Piton de la Fournaise can climb to variety of viewpoints, including the summit crater and lava flows, for a close-up look of the volcanic landscape. The most popular hike starts at Pas de Bellecombe, a picturesque overlook that provides panoramic views of the Enclos Fouqué and volcanic cones.

The interaction of hardened lava, ash, and volcanic rock produces a strange, rainbow tapestry, with shades of black, red, and grey forming intricate patterns sculpted by previous eruptions.

Some beaches near the volcano are greenish because they include olivine sand from picrate basalt lavas. The Grand Brûlé is made up of solidified lava flows that have accumulated over hundreds of thousands of years; the most recent ones are frequently the darkest and have the least vegetation, whilst older ones might be densely vegetated.



Flora, fauna, and conservation

While much of the volcanic terrain remains uninhabitable, the Piton de la Fournaise region is rich in wildlife. La Réunion National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, protects the volcano's unique ecosystems. Endemic plant species, such as tamarind trees and orchids, thrive in the fertile volcanic soil. The area is home to a variety of bird species, including the Mascarene swiftlet and La Réunion harrier.

Strict conservation procedures are in place to safeguard the vulnerable volcanic ecosystem. Visitors are encouraged to stay on authorised routes to reduce their impact on this natural wonder. Geophysical sensors (tiltmetres, extensometres, differential GPS receivers, and so on) constantly monitor volcanic activity. The data from these numerous sensors is transmitted to the Piton de la Fournaise Volcano Observatory, which is located near Bourg-Murat, northwest of the volcano. The observatory, which was established in 1978 following the Piton-Sainte-Rose flow, is run by the Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris (Global Geophysics Institute of Paris), in collaboration with CNRS and the University of La Réunion. The OVPF frequently releases information on Piton de la Fournaise's current activities on their website in French.



Tourism and adventure

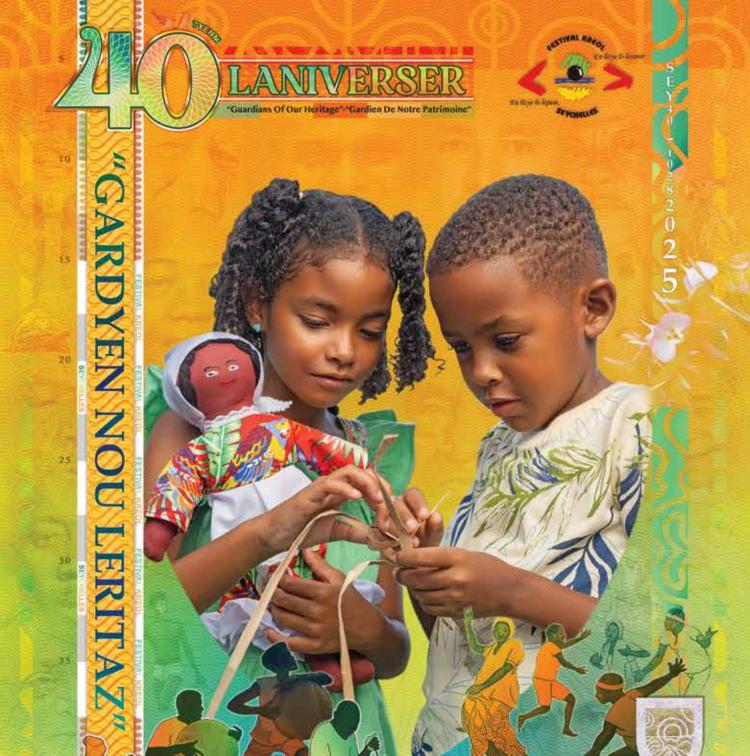
Piton de la Fournaise is a must-see for visitors to La Réunion Island. Hiking is the most popular pastime, with trails ranging from modest hikes to strenuous climbs. For those looking for a bird's eye view, helicopter trips provide breathtaking aerial views of lava flows, craters, and volcanic cones.

A forestry road, followed by a track, connects Bourg-Murat's plains highway to the Pas de Bellecombe (Bellecombe Pass), which includes a parking area and a snack shop. It is located above the caldera rim cliffs and provides a view of the caldera's northeastern portion. A stairway trail leads down from the pass to the caldera level. This walkway is restricted for safety concerns during seismic events that may occur before or during eruptions. A number of routes leading up the lava shield inside

the caldera are marked with white paint on the rocks. The lower parts of the Grand Brûlé can be reached via the N2 highway. Lava flows that have crossed the road are marked with markers. Access was completely free during eruptions until 1998; since then, access has been curtailed and is now effectively banned. The volcano's accessibility and relatively benign eruptions make it a desirable site for tourists and researchers.



 $\label{prop:visit:} \textbf{Www.airseychelles.com} \ \text{for more information}$

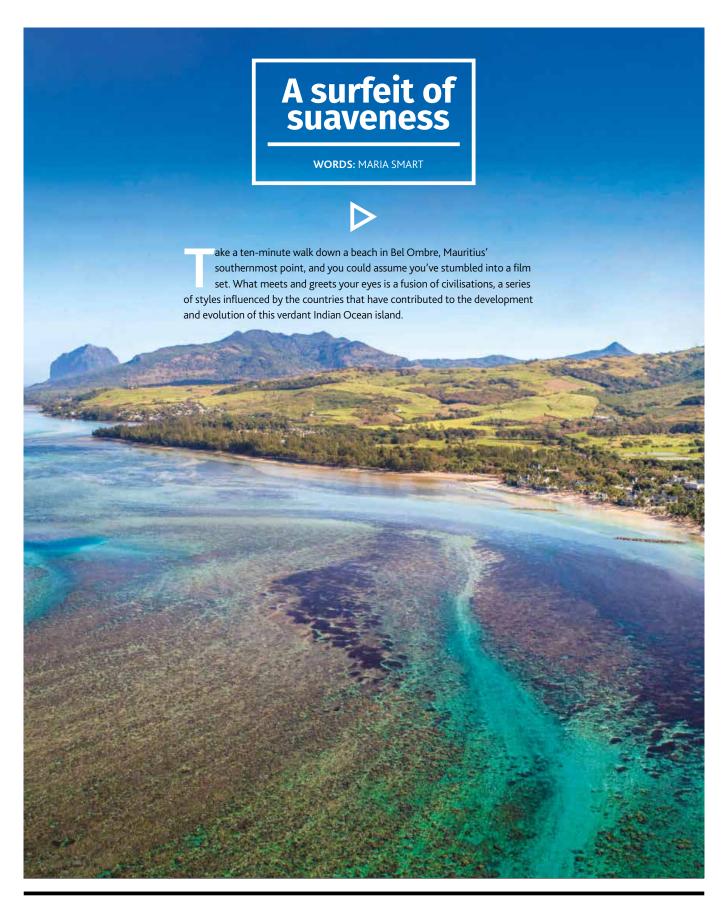


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The Seychelles National Institute for Culture, Heritage and the Arts





The famed Seven-Coloured Earth, a unique geological phenomenon.

The southern shore of Mauritius is a haven of natural beauty and cultural charm. This region is known for its mountainous scenery, clean beaches, and untouched serenity, which contrasts sharply with the bustling north. Highlights include the renowned Le Morne Brabant mountain, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the breathtaking Gris Gris rocks, and the magnificent Chamarel Waterfall. Visitors can explore the Black River Gorges National Park, rich in indigenous flora and fauna, or enjoy the tranquil lagoons and coral reefs ideal for snorkelling and diving. The southern coast is ideal for nature enthusiasts and those looking for a calm retreat.

Le Morne Brabant, a beautiful basaltic mountain on Mauritius' southwestern tip, rises to a height of 556 metres. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with strong historical and cultural value, representing freedom and resistance. The mountain was a haven for runaway slaves in the 18th and early 19th centuries, and its spectacular cliffs and lush surrounds convey a moving story of their struggles and optimism. It was once accessible only by a wooden bridge and functioned as a shelter for runaway slaves. It features spectacular underwater life and is popular for marlin fishing and kitesurfing. With exceptional surfing at Tamarin Bay, the building continued up the west coast and over to the east, leaving the south almost untouched.

Today, Le Morne is a popular hiking and adventure destination, with breathtaking views of the turquoise lagoons and the Indian Ocean. The area surrounding the mountain is as appealing, with scenic beaches and world-class kitesurfing sites. Le Morne Brabant is a natural and cultural treasure, attracting people with its beauty and history.

Le Gris Gris, located on Mauritius' southern shore, is known for its stunning cliffs and wild beauty. Unlike the island's generally quiet lagoons, this region has tremendous waves breaking against the craggy coastline, creating a breathtaking display of natural force. Visitors flock to the windswept terrain, the quiet perspective at La Roche Qui Pleure 'The Crying Rock', and the nearby tranquil gardens. Le Gris Gris provides a unique look into Mauritius' wild and pristine side, making it a must-see destination for nature lovers and photographers.

Chamarel Waterfall, located in the southwest of Mauritius, is one of the island's most spectacular natural beauties. It cascades from a height of about 100 metres, surrounded by lush foliage and basalt rock



Chamarel Waterfall

formations. The waterfall is supplied by the St. Denis River and flows all year, providing a lovely setting for photography and outdoor exploration. Visitors can discover the famed Seven-Coloured Earth, a unique geological phenomenon, making Chamarel a must-see trip. Chamarel Waterfall provides a calm and awe-inspiring experience, whether viewed from the designated lookout point or while hiking through the surrounding forest.

This sweep of splendour begins with the island's most calm and gorgeous surroundings, including luxury hotels that combine elegance with nature. These hotels promise extravagance, leisure, and amazing experiences nestled between sea and mountain, but this time it's a tribute to other contributing cultures that are centuries old.

Then there's the most stunning transition of all, as African reds give way to traditional colonial whites a few hundred metres down is the Heritage Le Telfair Golf & Spa Resort, located on Mauritius' gorgeous southern shore and inspired by the island's colonial history. The resort, which is nestled within lush tropical gardens and overlooks the azure Indian Ocean, mixes elegance with modern amenities. The Citronniers River cuts through and enhances this calm complex, conjuring up images of a Dutch town or

Cape Cod seashore, as well as a French colonial world. With another river, the St. Martin's, flowing through its 18-hole golf course at the foot of a mountain, it is a magnificent tapestry of twisting canals, carved bridges, and patches of green, all set beside the azure blue Indian Ocean: as much Martinique as Mauritius. Heritage Le Telfair offers the ideal balance of relaxation, activity, and elegance for an unforgettable island getaway.

Shanti Maurice Resort, located on Mauritius' unspoiled southern shore, is a magnificent sanctuary that seamlessly blends elegance with natural beauty. Surrounded by beautiful gardens, pure white sand beaches, and the dazzling Indian Ocean, this boutique resort has world-class amenities such as spacious suites and villas with private pools, gourmet dining experiences, and a famous spa. Whether looking for relaxation or action, guests can enjoy water sports, yoga classes, and excursions to discover the island's rich culture and surroundings. Shanti Maurice offers a peaceful getaway for tourists seeking relaxation and enjoyment.

Anantara Iko Mauritius is another luxury resort set along Mauritius' magnificent south-east coastline, near the lovely village of Blue Bay. Surrounded by beautiful tropical gardens and pristine white-sand beaches, the resort provides magnificent suites that combine modern amenities with Mauritian charm. Guests can enjoy world-class amenities and activities at Blue Bay Marine Park,



Shanti Maurice Resort & Spa, a luxurious Mauritius getaway.



Anantara Iko Mauritius Resort and Villas, connects you with traditional Mauritian culture.

such as snorkelling in the vivid coral reefs. Anantara Iko is an exquisite hideaway that combines Mauritius' rich culture and natural beauty.

If you can tear yourself away from the manicured splendour of the beach hotels, you'll find active evidence of a million citizens who have achieved exceptional racial and religious harmony. Port Louis, the mountainbacked compact capital with its mixed French and English street names and mosques, pagodas, temples, and churches sitting side by side, has busy markets, lovely old buildings, waterside eateries, craft centres, galleries, and lots of colonial remains. The Mauritius Postal Museum commemorates the 1847 misprinted two-pence stamp, which is today one of the most precious in the world. Surprisingly, the south was left till last when it came to resort construction, and that 'neglect' has worked to its advantage, allowing the region's natural beauty to be better protected. The valleys, the old extinct volcanoes, the waterfalls deep within the sugar cane fields, the gentle white sand coves and bays, the pure natural therapeutic bathing waters, the slightly rugged terrain, and the relatively sparse population have made the marketing of ecotourism or 'green' tourism viable.

Fortunately, now that some extraction has occurred, there are restrictions and regulations in place to protect



Bird's eye view of Port Louis.



Walking street in Port Louis.



Indian Mynah, a common and well adapted resident of the island.

the valuable elements that ancient Mauritian hands have traditionally regarded as their 'secrets of the south'. Philippe Requin was acutely aware of this when he devised his plans for the final leg of the Bel Ombre triumvirate; with an eye not on the incentive and tour market, as so many of his competitors, but on family groups and discerning individuals seeking rejuvenation and solace.

The beautiful islands, which early Portuguese explorers spotted off the bow on their journey home from the Indies 500 years ago, are once again being honoured as 'Gardens of Eden' and praised for their 'bewitching charm.' Mauritius, Seychelles, the Maldives, and Zanzibar, the new playgrounds of the rich, famous, and well-informed, have expertly merged exotic cultural and historical tones with a proclivity to pamper, propelling them to near the top of the list of the world's most attractive tourism destinations.

Since then, this plucky country, which cannot claim the 150 islands of the nearby Seychelles group, has taken what it has and transformed it into one of the world's most coveted vacation destinations, a vibrant destination. Visitors quickly observe the abundance of bird life, including Indian mynahs, paradise flycatchers, weaver birds, red cardinals, echo parakeets, kestrels, terns, and paille-en-queue (or tropic birds). The fruits and flowers, which include sixty species of orchid, aromatic frangipani, purple flowering jacaranda, pink red and white anthuriums, and reef corals, are equally unique and wonderfully coloured. Giant clams, primitive sponges and anemones, and sweeping schools of colourful fish can all be found within the protective sea barrier.

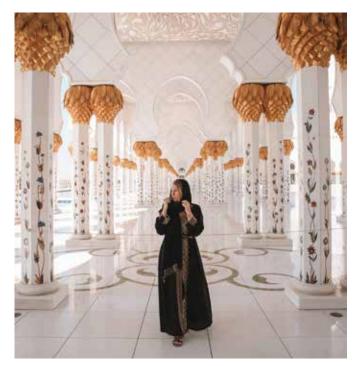


Air Seychelles operates flights between Seychelles and Mauritius, 3 times a week.

Visit: <u>www.airseychelles.com</u> for more information



The Abu Dhabi skyline is breathtaking.



Interior of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque.

Experience Abu Dhabi

WORDS: SILHOUETTE

bu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is a lively metropolis that combines modernity and history. It is known for its spectacular architecture and cultural treasures, which provide a rich blend of legacy and innovation. Abu Dhabi is an artistic, adventurous, and sophisticated hotspot with stunning beaches, world-class attractions, and a focus on sustainability.

Spending three days in Abu Dhabi allows you to explore the city's top attractions, immerse yourself in its rich heritage, and enjoy leisure activities. Here's a suggested itinerary:









Qasr Al Watan, presidential palace of the United Arab Emirates.



The Corniche Walk, a waterfront promenade in Abu Dhabi.

Day 1: Cultural & iconic landmarks

Morning: Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

Begin your day with this spectacular architectural marvel: the world's largest chandelier and marble mosaic. The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is one of the world's largest and most spectacular mosques. It was completed in 2007 and now serves as a hub for Islamic worship and cultural understanding. The mosque's design incorporates traditional Islamic architecture with modern elements, including 82 white marble domes, delicate floral designs, and one of the world's largest hand-knotted carpets. Its spacious courtyard is embellished with reflected pools, which add to the calm atmosphere. With a capacity of over 40,000 worshippers, the mosque represents peace, tolerance, and architectural perfection. Entry is free and guided tours are available at set times. Visit early morning or sunset for the best photos. Women can borrow abayas for free at the entrance.

Lunch: There are a number of restaurants near Khalifa Park serving Mediterranean, Arabic Indian and international buffet. Al Fanar Restaurant serves local dishes such as *machboos* and *balaleet*.

Afternoon: Qasr Al Watan (Presidential Palace)

Visit Qasr Al Watan, a gorgeous presidential palace that reflects the UAE's rich legacy, craftsmanship, and government. The palace, which opened to the public in 2019, has intricate Islamic architectural patterns, large rooms, and exhibits honouring Arab achievements to art, science,

and literature. It serves as both a working seat of government and a cultural icon, representing knowledge, tolerance, and the UAE's visionary leadership. Attend the 'Palace in Motion' light show in the evening. To avoid waiting in line, book your tickets online ahead of time.

Evening: Corniche Walk

The Corniche Walk in Abu Dhabi is a lovely promenade that runs along the city's seafront. It provides stunning views of the Arabian Gulf, verdant gardens, and a tranquil setting for strolling, jogging, or cycling. With separate pathways, covered places, and seating areas, it's a perfect setting for leisure and relaxation. The Corniche also offers public beaches, cafes, and playgrounds, making it a popular destination for families, visitors, and locals alike. Its breathtaking skyline backdrop adds to its allure, particularly at sunrise and sunset. Stroll along the promenade, see the beauty of the Arabian Gulf, and unwind at a shisha café like *Al Falamanki*.

Dinner:

There are many restaurants that combine excellent food with beautiful settings, perfect for enjoying Abu Dhabi's Corniche area. The Terrace on the Corniche (St. Regis Abu Dhabi) is a vibrant dining destination offering Middle Eastern and international cuisines, with indoor and outdoor seating options. The ambience is enriched by live cooking stations and a mezze selection served at your table. *Le Vendôme*, at Emirates Palace offers International buffet with a luxurious ambience and end with a famous *Gold Cappuccino*.



The Louvre Abu Dhabi



The Heritage Village

Day 2: Culture, history & entertainment

Morning: Louvre Abu Dhabi

The Louvre Abu Dhabi is a world-renowned art and civilisation museum located on Saadiyat Island in the UAE. It opened in 2017 and is known for its spectacular architecture, which includes a dome of interlaced patterns that produces a 'rain of light' appearance. The museum holds a broad collection of artworks, including Da Vinci's 'La Belle Ferronnière' and the futuristic dome with a 'Rain of Light' effect, as well as artefacts and cultural treasures from throughout the world, ranging from ancient to contemporary periods. The Louvre Abu Dhabi serves as a symbol of cultural interchange, highlighting the ties between civilisations and encouraging a global appreciation for art and history. Arrive early to enjoy the serene atmosphere. Tickets are around AED 63 (USD 17) for adults.

Lunch:

The Louvre Abu Dhabi has various eating alternatives that mix artistic splendour with culinary delights. Lunch at Art Lounge, located within the Louvre Abu Dhabi, includes light refreshments and spectacular views of the museum and the sea. Museum Café is ideal for a relaxed lunch, featuring Emirati and European-inspired meals, a children's menu, and a Grab & Go option. It is located in a Jean Nouvel-designed area with a patio and offers breathtaking views of the sea and the Abu Dhabi skyline. On most days, it is open from 10 a.m. to evening; closing times vary by weekday and weekend.



Yas Marina, located on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi.

Afternoon: Heritage Village

The Heritage Village in Abu Dhabi is a rebuilt traditional Emirati village that gives visitors an insight into the UAE's rich cultural heritage. It is located near the Corniche and depicts the typical Bedouin lifestyle through reconstructions of tents, souks, and dwellings. Visitors can see artefacts, local crafts, and demonstrations of traditional skills such as pottery and weaving. The town also houses a small museum and provides stunning views of Abu Dhabi's skyline, combining tradition and contemporary. Entry is free.

Evening: Yas Marina

Yas Marina, located on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, is a thriving waterfront attraction known for its magnificent yachts, exquisite food, and lively atmosphere. It provides amazing views of the Yas Marina Circuit, which hosts the Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Visitors can engage in a variety of activities, ranging from water sports to nightlife, making it a destination for amusement and leisure. Stroll around the shoreline and observe the luxurious yachts, or join an evening boat cruise for a unique view of Yas Island. Yas Marina's combination of elegance and vitality makes it a must-see destination for both locals and visitors.

Dinner:

The Corniche area provides a variety of dining experiences, ranging from casual cafes to expensive banquets, guaranteeing that there is something for everyone. Dine at *Cipriani*, which has stunning views of the Yas Marina Circuit and serves Italian fine dining, or at The Terrace on the Corniche at the St. Regis Abu Dhabi, which serves Middle Eastern and international cuisine in a sophisticated indoor-outdoor environment.





Paddling through the protected mangrove forest.



Desert safari, includes dune-bashing, camel rides, and dinner.

Day 3: Adventure & nature

Morning: Ferrari World Abu Dhabi

Ferrari World Abu Dhabi is a world-class entertainment park on Yas Island that honours the legacy of the legendary Ferrari brand. It is known for its exhilarating attractions, including Formula Rossa, the world's fastest roller coaster. The park has over 40 attractions, including simulators, live events, exhibits about Ferrari's history, and family-friendly experiences, all set in a Ferrari-themed environment. Ferrari World's iconic red canopy and high-energy atmosphere provide an unmatched blend of speed, innovation, and excitement for guests of all ages. Arrive at the opening hour to avoid long queues.

Lunch:

Ferrari World Abu Dhabi offers a broad selection of eating options that combine Italian tradition with international and Middle Eastern cuisine. Visit *Mamma Rossella* within Ferrari World for casual Italian food, or go to *Podio*, which is inspired by the Ferrari plant cafeteria and serves a mix of Arabic, Indian, and Western dishes with live cooking stations for an interactive eating experience.

Afternoon: Mangrove Kayaking Tour

The Mangrove Kayaking Tour in Abu Dhabi provides a one-of-a-kind opportunity to discover the region's tranquil natural beauty. Paddling through the protected mangrove forests allows tourists to appreciate the tranquillity of these coastal ecosystems while also witnessing different animals such as herons and flamingos, fish and marine life. The trip is an

engaging experience that takes people through the complicated waterways while highlighting the biological relevance of mangroves in maintaining coastal areas. It's the ultimate combination of adventure and nature for eco-tourists and outdoor aficionados. Wear water-friendly clothing. Make an advance booking.

Evening: Observation Deck at 300

The Observation Deck at 300, located on the 74th level of the Etihad Tower in Abu Dhabi, provides stunning panoramic views of the city skyline, the Arabian Gulf, and beyond. At 300 metres, it offers one of the best vantage points in the UAE. Visitors may get a full 360-degree perspective of attractions like the Corniche, Emirates Palace, and desert vistas. The deck also includes a sophisticated lounge, which is ideal for sightseeing, photography, or relaxing with a refreshing drink or high tea. The entry price is redeemable for food and beverages.

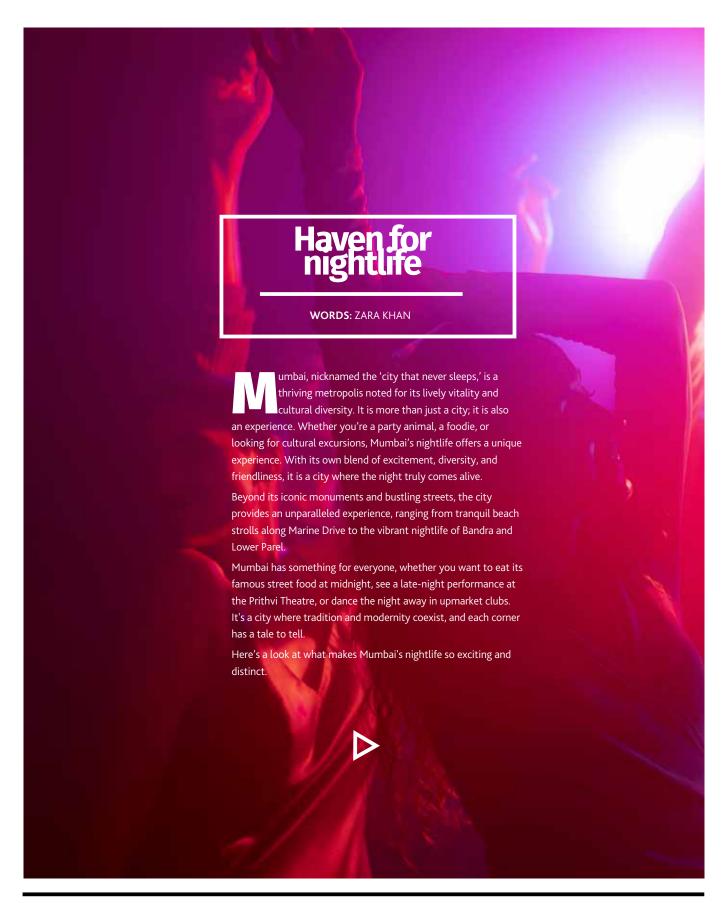
Dinner:

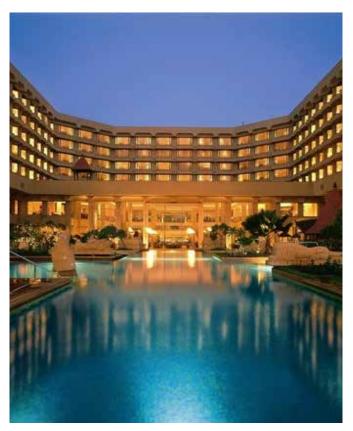
Zuma serves Japanese izakaya-style food. Their black cod and sushi platters come highly recommended.

If you still have time, try a half-day or evening desert safari. It includes dune-bashing, camel rides, and a dinner beneath the stars.



Air Seychelles will operate flights between Seychelles and Abu Dhabi, 6 times a week starting May 2025. Visit: <u>www.airseychelles.com</u> for more information





Trilogy is one of the good late-night clubs in Juhu.

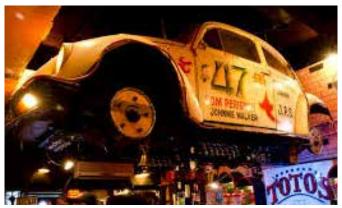
The funk bars and clubs

Mumbai's pub and club culture is second to none, catering to various tastes and interests. Bandra, Andheri, and Lower Parel are popular nightlife destinations. Some must-see attractions include:

Trilogy, located in Juhu, is one of Mumbai's most recognisable nightclubs, known for its opulent ambience and energetic vibe. The club's stylish furnishings, which span two levels, feature plush seating, colourful lighting, and an expansive dance floor, setting the stage for an amazing night.

Trilogy, known for its world-class DJs and tailored playlists, attracts a fashionable audience seeking the ideal combination of music, cocktails, and excitement. The bar offers an outstanding assortment of drinks, wines and spirits, so there's something for everyone. Whether you're a partygoer or simply want to enjoy nightlife at its best, Trilogy in Juhu guarantees an unforgettable experience.

Toto's Garage, located in the heart of Bandra, is a quirky and popular pub known for its distinctive garage-themed decor. With automobile components on the walls, registration plates as design elements, and a classic Volkswagen dangling from the ceiling, the ambience emanates charm and originality. It is well-known for its lively environment, terrific music, low-cost beers, and wonderful pub munchies, making it popular with both residents and tourists. The playlist frequently includes old rock classics, which creates a nostalgic and vibrant atmosphere ideal for a casual night out.



Toto's Garage, located in the heart of Bandra.



Matahaari, located in Worli.

On the other end, Colaba and Lower Parel are Mumbai's most lively nightlife districts ideal for combining work, play, and food in a fashionable atmosphere, with each delivering their own unique charm and experience.

Colaba is popular among both locals and tourists because of its combination of historic charm and bustling venues. The neighbourhood is home to notable establishments such as Leopold Café and Cafe Mondegar, which are noted for their lively ambience, diverse crowds, and delectable cuisine. For those looking for a refined night out, Colaba Social provides a stylish setting ideal for cocktails and light nibbles.

Lower Parel is known for its premium nightlife. This neighbourhood distinguishes out for its breathtaking rooftop views and expensive cocktails. Tamasha and Lord of the Drinks are two more popular establishments that serve unique drinks in a boisterous ambience. Lower Parel's blend of modernity and luxury makes it ideal for people who want to dance the night away or spend a nice evening with friends.

For people who enjoy a premium atmosphere and world-class DJs. Matahaari, located in Worli, is a famous nightlife hotspot that exudes luxury and sophistication. With its sumptuous surroundings, cutting-edge sound system, and world-class DJs, it provides a spectacular and amazing party experience. The venue caters to an affluent audience, with a blend of upbeat music, beautiful cocktails, and a classy atmosphere. It sets the tone for a wonderful night out in Mumbai, whether you're dancing to international artists' beats or spending a fashionable evening with pals.



Spicy mutton seekh kebabs.

Late-night eateries

Mumbai's food scene comes alive at night, with countless late-night restaurants serving everything from street cuisine to luxury meals. Some popular eating places are:

Bademiya, located on the bustling streets of Colaba, is a legendary latenight eatery known for its delectable kebabs and rolls. It opened decades ago and has since become a popular destination for both residents and tourists looking for tasty street cuisine. It is open till the early hours and provides a variety of delectable dishes, including juicy *chicken tikkas* and spicy mutton *seekh kebabs*. The informal, energetic ambience, as well as the tantalising fragrance of grilled meats, make it a must-visit destination in Mumbai, especially after a night out.

Ayub's, located in Fort, is a paradise for foodies looking for great and reasonably priced late-night snacks. Ayub's, known for its juicy wraps and delicious *kebabs*, mixes speedy service with delectable tastes. Ayub's is a popular hangout for office workers, college students, and night owls, with menu options ranging from hot chicken *tikka* wraps to vegetarian delicacies. Its basic but vibrant street-side setting makes it the ultimate Mumbai experience for anyone looking for a hearty midnight lunch.

Sigdi in Bandra is a renowned casual dining restaurant in Mumbai that serves flavourful North Indian and Mughlai food. The restaurant has a



Bademiya, a culinary landmark behind Taj Palace Hotel, Colaba.

cosy setting and specialises in traditional cuisine including kebabs, biryanis, and curries made with original spices and procedures. It's a popular hangout for foodies looking for rich, meaty meals in a relaxing atmosphere. The combination of outstanding food and a dynamic environment makes it a popular choice for both residents and visitors.

Delhi Darbar in Mumbai is a lively and famous restaurant noted for its Mughlai and North Indian dishes. At night, the restaurant comes alive with a bustling atmosphere, attracting diners looking for flavourful delicacies such as biryanis, kebabs, and creamy curries. The warm lighting and lively environment make it ideal for both family dinners and late-night cravings. Located in popular neighbourhoods such as Marine Lines, Delhi Darbar provides an exceptional culinary experience with a touch of traditional charm, ideal for a full lunch or dinner under the city lights.

Nariman Point, in the centre of Mumbai, is home to various stylish eateries with spectacular views of the Arabian Sea. These cafes are well-known for their elegant environment, making them perfect for both casual hangouts and professional meetings. They serve a variety of cuisines, from coffee and pastries to world fare, and cater to both locals and tourists seeking a calm yet elegant atmosphere. It is a popular destination for food and coffee enthusiasts, including restaurants such as Café New York, The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, and many more.





Live music at Blue Frog in Mumbai.



Hard Rock Cafe in Mumbai is a popular, energetic spot.

Live music and performances

Mumbai's nightlife offers a variety of live events, from indie bands to Bollywood music.

Blue Frog in Mumbai is a well-known live music venue and nightclub that combines contemporary music, amazing food, and an energetic atmosphere. Located in the middle of the city, it has served as a hotspot for both local and international performers, displaying a diverse spectrum of genres from jazz and rock to electronic music. The sleek, modern decor and cutting-edge sound system appeal to music fans looking for an outstanding evening experience. It's also recognised for its tasty cocktails and lively atmosphere, making it a must-see for partygoers and music fans.

Hard Rock Cafe in Mumbai is a popular, energetic spot offering a vibrant atmosphere for music and food lovers alike. Located in the heart of the city, it combines classic American cuisine with rock 'n' roll culture, featuring signature burgers, cocktails, and memorabilia from legendary musicians. The cafe is known for its live music performances, creating an electrifying vibe, making it a favourite for both locals and tourists. With its signature Hard Rock flair, it's an iconic destination for dining, entertainment, and a taste of rock history in Mumbai.



Prithvi Theatre is located in the upscale neighbourhood of Juhu.

Cultural nights

Mumbai provides a diverse range of cultural activities at night, merging history and contemporary. From the magnificent Gateway of India illuminated under the stars to the bustling street entertainment at Colaba or Kala Ghoda, the city comes alive after dark. Evening exhibitions are frequently held at art galleries such as the Jehangir Art Gallery, and theatres such as the Prithvi Theatre provide plays in a variety of languages. Live performances at clubs or open-air locations add to Mumbai's midnight attractiveness, making it an exciting mix of art, history, and entertainment.

Visit the Gateway of India and enjoy the tranquil beauty of this historic landmark beneath the night sky, or take a walk down the Queen's Necklace for a true Mumbai experience.

Safety tips

While Mumbai is reasonably safe compared to many other cities, it's important to keep safety in mind when enjoying the nightlife.

- · Look for reliable transport options, such as app-based taxis.
- Avoid isolated dark places, especially when alone.
- Store your valuables securely and drink responsibly.



Choose a direct route from Seychelles to Mumbai or take advantage of partner airline flights via Colombo to other cities in India.

Visit: www.airseychelles.com for more information

Dynamic cultural scene

WORDS: TIM ROGERS

el Aviv, Israel's lively Mediterranean metropolis, is known not just for its active cultural scene and innovative economy, but also for its beautiful coastline and laid-back outdoor lifestyle. Whether you're a local or a visitor, the city's beaches and outdoor amenities are at the heart of its unique charm.

Tel Aviv is a fairly liberal, secular city, with the unofficial motto 'live and let live.' The city is small enough that you can walk to most areas. The weather is pleasant most of the year, and people may be found sitting in cafes even at night, and the restaurants serve cuisine from a variety of countries. Tel Aviv is highly welcoming to vegetarians and vegans. Most residents own dogs, and dog sitters can be seen riding around town with multiple dogs on leashes. There is a richness of cultural activities, including a world-class symphony, opera, jazz, rock, Middle Eastern, and many more genres of music representing Jews of all races, Arabs, foreign workers, and others who mingle here. There are museums, theatres, sporting activities, parks, and picturesque marketplaces. There's historic Jaffa, the Bauhaus 'White City,' and a variety of architectural styles. There are museums and theatres and sports events and parks and beautiful markets. There is historic Jaffa, the Bauhaus 'White City,' old and new architectural styles.

The beaches of Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv's coastline stretches for more than 13 kilometres, with a variety of gorgeous beaches catering to a wide range of interests and activities. These sandy beach stretches are not just more than simply a place to sunbathe; they represent the city's common garden, brimming with energy and life.

Gordon Beach is one of Tel Aviv's most popular and dynamic beaches, situated on the city's bustling promenade. It is a popular destination for both locals and tourists because of its golden sands, clear Mediterranean waters, and vibrant environment. During the day, guests may enjoy sunbathing, beach volleyball, and water activities, while the evenings bring a celebratory atmosphere with surrounding restaurants, bars, and live entertainment. Gordon Beach, located among hotels and cultural sites, offers a relaxing and entertaining experience in the heart of Tel Aviv.

Frishman Beach, located in central Tel Aviv, is a popular and family-friendly destination on the city's bustling beachfront. Its sandy sands, beautiful Mediterranean waters, and relaxed environment make it perfect for sunbathing, swimming, and beach activities. Surrounded by cafes, restaurants, and hotels, it provides quick access to amenities, making it an ideal alternative for travellers for relaxing under the sun or enjoying the busy promenade, as well as swimming or watching a stunning sunset.

Banana Beach, at the southern end of Tel Aviv's shoreline, has a laidback and bohemian air. It's popular with locals and tourists looking for a quieter ambience, and it's perfect for sunbathing, picnics, and beach games. The beach is well-known for its relaxing vibe, and it frequently holds drum circles and informal gatherings, particularly at sunset. Banana Beach, with its neighbouring eateries and distinctive, quiet setting, is the best place to escape the city's hustle and bustle.

Near the Hilton Hotel in Tel Aviv, Hilton Beach is a vibrant and diverse beach recognised for its welcoming atmosphere. It is popular with surfers and dog owners, with separate spaces for each. The beach has soft sand.



calm Mediterranean waves, and surrounding facilities including eateries and rental businesses. Its inclusive and colourful atmosphere makes it a popular place for leisure, water sports, and socialising.

On the southern end of Tel Aviv's shoreline near Jaffa, Alma Beach has a tranquil and relaxed ambience. It is popular among people wishing to get away from the throng because of its natural, unspoiled attractiveness. The beach's vast beachfront and easy-going atmosphere is excellent for picnics, leisurely walks, and watching beautiful sunsets. This beach with its fewer amenities, appeals to those looking for a more relaxing and authentic beach experience.

Outdoor lifestyle in Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv's warm climate and scenic surroundings make it a paradise for outdoor enthusiasts. The city encourages an active lifestyle, seamlessly blending urban and natural elements.

The Tayelet, Tel Aviv's famed beachfront promenade, runs along the city's Mediterranean coastline. It is ideal for strolling, jogging, or cycling, and connects the city's gorgeous beaches with cafes, restaurants, and cultural attractions. The Tayelet, with its spectacular sea vistas, bustling energy, and mix of locals and tourists, is a popular spot for relaxation, recreation, and enjoying Tel Aviv's laid-back beachfront lifestyle.

Park HaYarkon, a vast urban park along the Yarkon River, is known as Tel Aviv's 'green lung'. It has lovely lawns, walking and cycling trails, gardens, and lakes, making it perfect for picnics, sports, and outdoor activities. Popular attractions include paddle boating, a rock garden, and family playgrounds. It is a popular destination for both locals and visitors due to its peaceful atmosphere and numerous recreational opportunities.

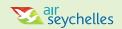
The Mediterranean shoreline is a surfing and water sports hotspot, with great conditions year-round. Hilton Beach and Frishman Beach are popular surfing, paddle boarding, and kayaking destinations, with surf schools and rental shops nearby. Calm mornings are ideal for standup paddleboarding, while bigger waves draw surfers of all skill levels.

Whether you're a novice or an expert, Tel Aviv's thriving water sports culture offers limitless options for adventure and fun in the sun.

Tel Aviv holds a number of open-air cultural events throughout the year to celebrate its vibrant and creative spirit. The city's beaches, parks, and plazas become locations for festivals, concerts, and performances. Park HaYarkon frequently hosts large-scale music concerts and festivals, and the Tayelet promenade hosts art fairs, street performances, and yoga sessions by the sea. During the summer, outdoor cinema screenings and dance performances are held in public locations such as Rabin Square and Tel Aviv's Old Port. Furthermore, the annual White Night Festival presents live music, art installations, and cultural activities around the city, resulting in a lively, open-air celebration of Tel Aviv's distinct vitality.

It is a bike- and scooter-friendly city, ideal for exploring on two wheels. With a network of dedicated bike lanes and scenic paths like the Tayelet promenade, it's simple to get around the city while admiring the sights. Bike and e-scooter rentals are readily available via app-based businesses, providing a simple and environmentally responsible way to explore Tel Aviv's diverse districts, beaches, and parks. Cycling and scootering are popular and enjoyable methods to explore the city, whether for transportation or recreation.

Tel Aviv's beaches and outdoor lifestyle are central to its identity, providing the ideal combination of relaxation and action. Whether you're catching waves, practising sunset yoga, or savouring fresh seafood by the sea, the city's natural allure is undeniable. Tel Aviv is an ideal location for individuals who enjoy the sun, the water, and a bustling outdoor culture.



Air Seychelles operates flights between Seychelles and Tel Aviv, 2 times a week.

Visit: <u>www.airseychelles.com</u> for more information



New Direct Flights to Abu Dhabi Starting May 2025 Flights from Seychelles to Abu Dhabi will operate six times a week from 23 May 2025, with daily services available from 9 October 2025 onwards. With a flight time from Seychelles of approximately 4.5 hours, Abu Dhabi is the ideal destination for those looking to combine business, leisure, and world-class shopping in one trip. Flights bookable on airseychelles.com Download our App or visit your local travel agents.

Inside Air Seychelles



Important Information

Airport

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

I ■ Information

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

(1)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.

1 Banking

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

Public holidays 2025

 New Year 	1 Jan
Holiday	2 Jan
 Good Friday 	18 April
• Easter Sunday	20 April

Easter MondayLabour Day21 April1 May

18 June

Constitution Day

Corpus Christi 19 JuneNational Day 29 June

Assumption DayAll Saints Day15 Aug1 Nov

• Immaculate Conception 8 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.

WW 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 accomodation 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.



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 are encouraged to have travel insurance that covers the duration of their stay in Seychelles.

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.

Singapore

Melbourne

Bangkok

Sydney

Delhi

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ISAGO AND IOSA CERTIFICATIONS

Air Seychelles, the national airline of the Seychelles, proudly announces its successful attainment of the IATA Safety Audit for Ground Operations (ISAGO) and the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) certifications. Accredited by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in January 2025, these endorsements mark a significant milestone in the airline's ongoing commitment to safety and operational excellence.

The ISAGO certification, a first for Air Seychelles, was achieved following a rigorous process that began in June 2023 with a thorough analysis by an external IATA-trained consultant. This was complemented by on-site training for key personnel in April 2024 and culminated in August 2024 with an exhaustive week- long audit conducted by IATA-trained ISAGO auditors. The evaluation encompassed critical areas such as passenger and baggage handling, aircraft ground movement, and cargo operations, ensuring adherence to industry standards.

ISAGO is an internationally recognised programme designed for the oversight of ground handling service providers (GHSPs), which emphasises the implementation of standardised operational procedures. By achieving this certification, Air Seychelles demonstrates its dedication to enhancing performance, reducing risks and aligning with industry best practices. In addition, Air Seychelles has also successfully completed the IOSA renewal accreditation process, an evaluation designed to assess the operational management and control systems of airlines. With this certification, the national airline adheres to more than 900 international safety standards, underscoring the importance given to global aviation safety.

Air Seychelles has been a member of IATA since 2006, with the ISAGO registration valid until August 2026 and the IOSA accreditation until January 2027. Following these periods, renewal audits will be conducted to ensure continuous improvement and adherence to safety standards.



AIR SEYCHELLES MARKS FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE TO TEL AVIV

In February, Air Seychelles participated in the Israel Tourism Community Event hosted by Terranova and Lametayel in Tel Aviv. This event highlighted the airline's significant presence in the region over the past five years. Air Seychelles commenced its operations to Tel Aviv in November 2019. Collaborating closely with Tourism Seychelles, led by Director General Bernadette Willemin, the Air Seychelles' Commercial Team, headed by Chief Commercial Officer, Charles Johnson took this opportunity to promote the ease of travelling to the breathtaking islands of the Seychelles.

With twice-weekly flights and convenient connections to key destinations such as Mauritius, Johannesburg, and the upcoming addition of Abu Dhabi this May, Air Seychelles is committed to making access more convenient than ever for travellers.



SEASONAL OPERATIONS TO REUNION ISLAND

Air Seychelles is pleased to announce the successful completion of its seasonal operations to Reunion Island, which ran from 30 December 2024 to 18 January 2025.

During this period, Air Seychelles carried nearly 500 passengers between the two islands across eight rotations, showcasing strong demand and connectivity between the Seychelles and La Réunion.

The seasonal flights included two direct services between Seychelles and La Réunion, as well as additional routes that made a stop in Mauritius, facilitating travel options for passengers. This initiative, in collaboration with Tourism Seychelles, marked a significant move to enhance accessibility and foster travel between the two beautiful island destinations.

The operation is part of a strategic partnership initiated in June 2024, following the signing of a Special Prorate Agreement (SPA) with Air Austral. This agreement came in response to Air Austral's suspension of operations to Seychelles, enabling Air Seychelles to step in and provide vital links to La Réunion.

Air Seychelles extends its gratitude to its passengers, Tourism Seychelles and travel partners for their continued support of this endeavour and looks forward to further strengthening these ties and providing more exciting travel opportunities in the future.

RECOGNISING LONG-SERVICE STAFF

Air Seychelles proudly recognised the dedication and commitment of its long-serving staff during a special ceremony held during the airline's annual staff party in December at the Berjaya Beau Vallon Bay Hotel. This joyous occasion celebrated 31 employees who have reached significant milestones in their careers, with 21 of them present to receive accolades for their unwavering service.

The event honoured staff who have dedicated between 10 to 35 years to the airline, showcasing their loyalty and contributions that have significantly shaped Air Seychelles' journey.

Notably, employee retention at Air Seychelles has remained strong since its creation in 1977. In 2023, the airline recognised 62 long-serving staff members and is looking forward to celebrate over 70 more this year. These figures reflect the positive work environment and commitment to employee satisfaction.

"I am filled with pride to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our long-serving employees, year after year, and in large numbers too. Their commitment over the years has been instrumental to the growth and success of the national airline, and I am grateful for their invaluable contributions" expressed Captain Sandy Benoiton, Air Seychelles' Chief Executive Officer. "I was also proud to have stood among them as a recipient myself in 2024 and to celebrate two decades with our beloved national airline."

Air Seychelles remains committed to recognising and appreciating the talents and efforts of its employees, reinforcing its belief that its workforce is its greatest asset.

To note, 2024's longest-serving staff are Marguerite Esparon, from the procurement department, and Spencer Panagary, an aircraft engineer who both joined the airline in 1989 and now celebrate 35 years of service.



Our Network

International Network



MAP KEYS

Air Seychelles Flights

----- Air Seychelles Seasonal or Charter Route

Air Seychelles Codeshares

Air Seychelles Interline Partner

CODESHARE PARTNERS



QATAR





INTERLINE PARTNERS









Sri Lankan Airlines Network (India)



Air Seychelles Domestic Network

Tokyo

Sydney

Melbourne



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



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





This aircraft is equipped with **seyStream** wireless in-flight entertainment system which can only be accessed on your personal device (smartphone, tablet or laptop).

- 1 Activate and maintain airplane or flight mode throughout the flight.
- 2 Enable the WiFi function.
- 3 Select 'seyStream' network and connect.

*The automatic pop-up will re-direct you to a browser and **seyStream** will be ready for use. If the pop-up does not appear automatically, type in 'airfi.aero' in your preferred browser.

As per the airline regulation, **seyStream** will not be accessible during taxi, take-off and landing or as advised by the cabin crew.



Air Seychelles global offic	es	IIIside All Seyclieles
India	Capital: New Delhi Languages: Hindi, English Currency: Indian Rupee Area: 3,287,590 km² Population: 1,451,000,000 (2024) Air Seychelles destination: Mumbai	Bird Group Ltd 204, 2nd Floor A Wing Kanakia Wall Street 400093 Mumbai Tel: +91 959 4013686 Email: hmsales@bird.travel hmres@bird.travel
Israel	Capital: Jerusalem Language: Hebrew Currency: Israel Shekel Area: 20,770 km² Population: 9,400,000 (2024) Air Seychelles destination: Tel Aviv	AIRLINES GSA 3 Gilboa St Airport City 7019900 Tel Aviv Tel: +972 3 5160598 Email: hm@airlines-gsa.com
La Réunion	Capital: Saint-Denis Language: French Currency: Euro Land area: 2,512 km² Population: 885,700 (2024) Air Seychelles destination: Saint-Denis	Rogers Aviation (Mauritius) Ltd The Gardens Bagatelle Office Park Moka, Mauritius Tel: +230 2026671 Email: salim.mohungoo@rogers-aviation.com
Mauritius	Capital: Port Louis Languages: French, English, Creole Currency: Rupees Area: 2,040 km ² Population: 1,260,000 (2024) Air Seychelles destination: Port Louis	Rogers Aviation (Mauritius) Ltd The Gardens Bagatelle Office Park Moka, Mauritius Tel: +230 2026697 Email: salim.mohungoo@rogers-aviation.com
Seychelles	Capital: Victoria Languages: Seychellois Creole, English Currency: Seychelles Rupee Area: 456 km² Population: 130,418 (2024) Air Seychelles destination: Mahé & Praslin	Air Seychelles Ltd Seychelles International Airport PO Box 386 Mahé Tel: +248 4391000 Email: callcentre@airseychelles.com
South Africa	Capital: Pretoria Languages: English, Afrikaans (11 official languages) Currency: South African Rand Area: 1,221,037 km² Population: 63,000,000 (2024) Air Seychelles destination: Johannesburg	Rogers Aviation 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
Sri Lanka	Capital: Colombo Languages: Sinhala, Tamil Currency: Sri Lankan Rupee Area: 65,610 km² Population: 23,100,000 (2024) Air Seychelles destination: Colombo	Air Park (Pvt) Ltd 377A/1 Galle Road, Colombo 03 Sri Lanka Tel: +94 (0) 11 237 2870 Email: airseychelles@airpark.aero
United Arab Emirates		Sharaf Travels LLC



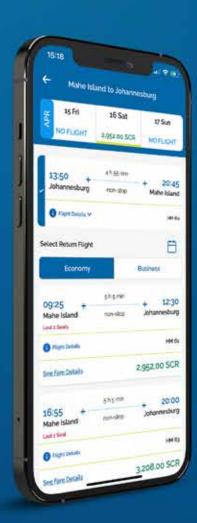


Capital: Abu Dhabi Language: Arabic Currency: United Arab Emirates Dirham Area: Abu Dhabi

Population: 12,500,000 (2024) Air Seychelles destination: Abu Dhabi

Sharaf Travels LLC Al Reem Plaza, Electra St. Tel: Abu Dhabi, +971 2 67 70 678 Email: hmauh.res@sharaftravel.com Sharaf Travel Building, Khalid Bin Al Waleed St. Tel: Dubai, +971 4 40 60 511

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