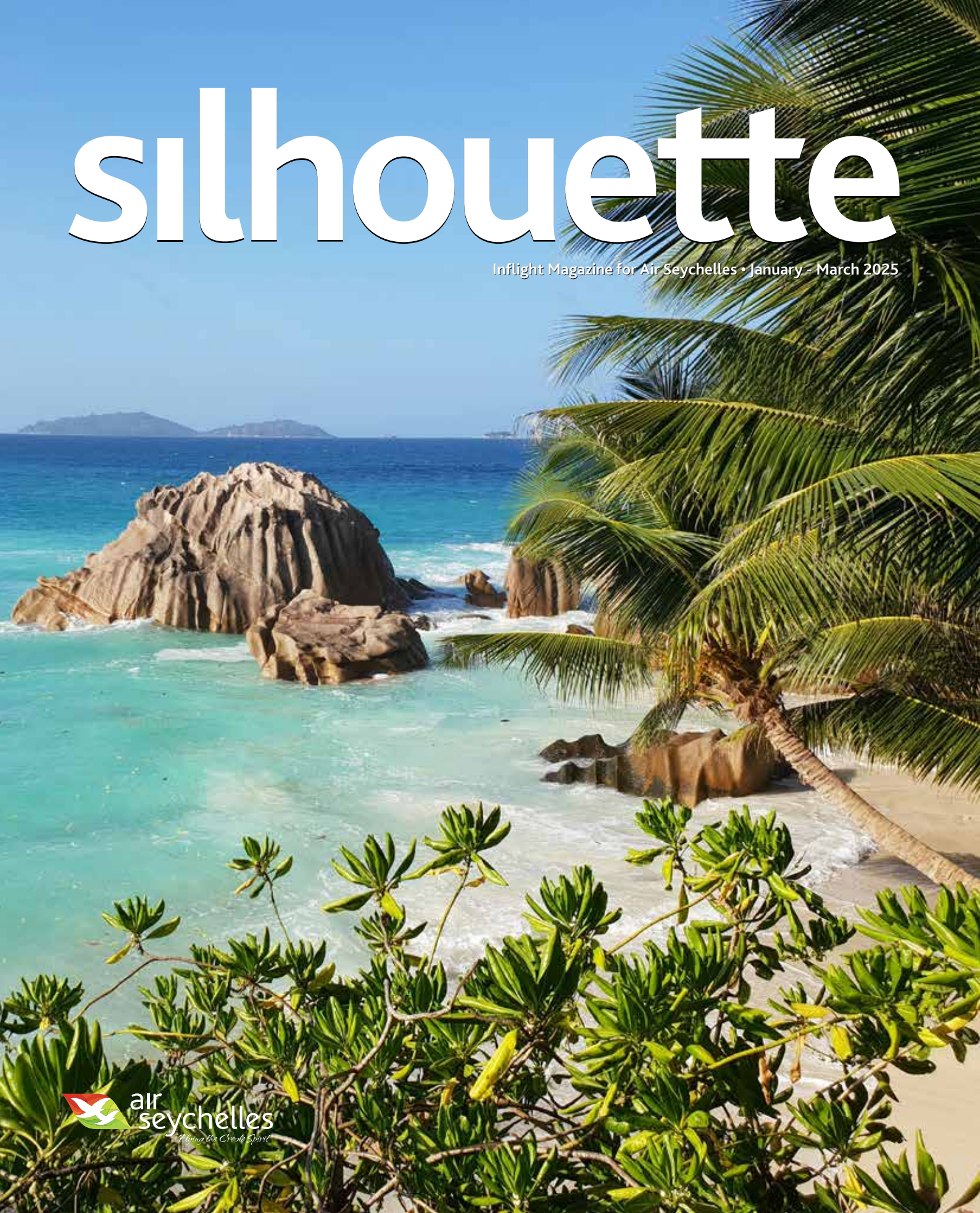


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Inflight Magazine for Air Seychelles • January - March 2025



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Dear Valued Passengers,

As you settle into your seat, I wish to take a moment to extend a warm welcome aboard Air Seychelles, our islands' national airline. Whether you are returning home, or embarking on a new adventure, we are delighted to have you onboard and appreciate your choice to fly with us.

As we embrace all the possibilities that the year 2025 brings with it, let's reflect on 2024 and how transformative it has been for all of us. We have faced challenges with resilience and have taken significant strides in ensuring that your journey, both in the air and on the ground, is as enjoyable as possible. Our dedicated team has worked tirelessly to enhance our services, streamline operations, and create unforgettable travel experiences for all our passengers.

We are proud to announce that our commitment to excellence has not gone unnoticed. In 2024, Air Seychelles was honoured with several prestigious accolades accredited by the World Travel Awards in November 2024, whereby we were crowned 'Indian Ocean's Leading Airline' for the second consecutive year. This was made possible by the hard work of our team and the loyalty of travellers like you.

In late December, we launched our seasonal operations to the beautiful islands of La Réunion which will run until 18 January 2025. Known for its stunning landscapes, vibrant culture, and warm hospitality, La Réunion offers an exhilarating escape. To book, visit our website www.airseychelles.com or contact your preferred travel agent.

Looking forward, we are delighted to announce a new route in 2025! Turn to Page 66 to find out where we are flying off to this May 2025. It's an exciting time at Air Seychelles!

Please take a moment to complete the post-flight survey that will be sent to you on your arrival. This will help us maintain the high levels of service we strive to offer. I now invite you to sit back, relax, and enjoy the journey ahead – whether it is for business or leisure.

Happy Travels!



Captain Sandy Benoiton
Chief Executive Officer



“
Offering unforgettable
travel experiences
”

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Lifeline of Bangkok

Travelling up and down this famed river in the twenty-first century is one of the cheapest and most enjoyable methods to explore the city.



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Cover image
Sublime natural granite sculptures grace La Digue's Anse Source
D'Argent beach. Image © unsplash.com

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Branded Residences become the new Luxury Trend in Real Estate



The blending of high-end living with the prestige of globally renowned hospitality brands a trend now referred to globally as branded residences is now setting the benchmark for exclusive living, offering an unmatched combination of luxurious design, premium services, and the added attraction of association with elite hotel brands. As more and more affluent buyers seek lifestyle experiences over just property ownership, branded residences have swiftly become synonymous with the ultimate symbols of status, convenience, and security.

How are Branded Residences Defined?

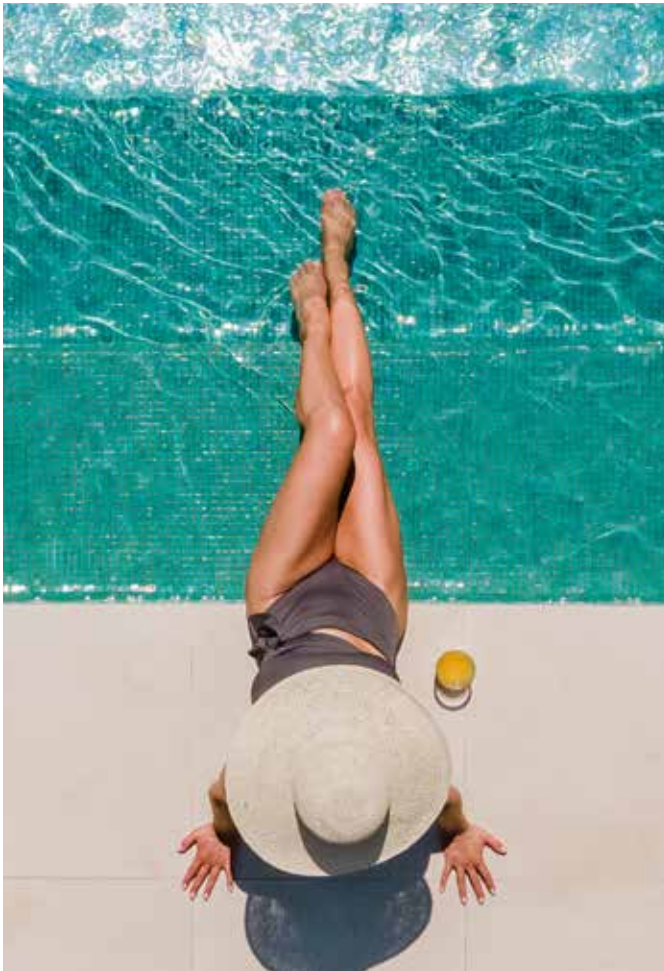
Branded residences are luxury homes developed in partnership with leading hotel or fashion brands. They offer not just high-end living spaces but are integrated into the operations of five-star hotels, providing access to hotel services and amenities such as concierge services, housekeeping, room service, fine dining, and

spa facilities. Buyers of branded residences enjoy the comforts of a private home with the luxury lifestyle and high standards of service that globally recognized brands are known for.

More than just homes, branded residences represent a coming together of real estate and hospitality. Each residence is carefully designed to embody the brand's ethos, be it timeless elegance, modern luxury, or cutting-edge innovation. Residents don't just own a property; they enjoy a piece of the brand's legacy and reputation.

The Growing Appeal of Branded Residences

The appeal of branded residences is multi-faceted. Firstly, and most importantly, there is the assurance of quality and consistency. Buying a Branded Residence means investing in a property that is built and maintained to the highest standards,



overseen by established names in the hospitality industry. The brands' reputations for luxury and service provide peace of mind for buyers and significantly enhance the long-term value of the property.

Moreover, for discerning investors, these residences represent more than just a place to live – they offer a lifestyle experience. With world-class services and amenities just a phone call away, homeowners enjoy the best of hotel living, while also having the privacy of a personal residence. The convenience factor is unparalleled; residents can have the world-class service of a five-star hotel staff at their disposal, without ever leaving their homes. Branded residences also appeal to a growing demographic of travellers who want consistent quality wherever they are in the world. For many, this is not just about buying a property in one location but about having access to a global network. Many of these developments are integrated into brand loyalty programmes, offering homeowners privileges and discounts at other properties within the same hotel group around the world.

Investment and Earnings Potential

From an investment perspective, branded residences stands out. Properties associated with luxury brands are often found to be more resilient to market fluctuations and appreciate more consistently over time. Recent studies have shown that branded residences can command a price premium of up to 30% over non-branded luxury real estate. Buyers are not only purchasing the physical space but also a brand's identity, which helps maintain high demand and long-term value.



These properties also offer an additional level of security. For many buyers, especially those investing in second homes, the management services provided as part of branded residences are a key factor. The property is maintained and looked after all of the time, offering peace of mind and ease of ownership. The hassle of property maintenance, guest management, and even short-term rentals is handled by the brand's management team, making it a truly turnkey investment.

Many branded residences are also tied to hotel rental programs, allowing homeowners to generate a rental return when they are not occupying the property. This option makes branded residences an attractive choice for those looking to diversify their portfolio with revenue-generating real estate. The flexibility to monetize the property while also enjoying the lifestyle benefits creates a unique proposition for many investors.

The Seychelles joins the Trend with Meliá Residences

While branded residences have thrived in places like Florida and Dubai, the trend is making its way to Seychelles with the introduction of the branded residence apartment development, The Residences at Meliá Seychelles, a groundbreaking project that will transform the real estate landscape of this paradise destination. Conveniently located just ten minutes from the Seychelles International Airport, the development overlooks the Eden Island Super-Yacht Marina and the Cerf Island channel.

This premier waterfront development will feature a range of branded residences apartments, managed and serviced by the world-renowned Meliá Hotels & Resorts. Buyers will enjoy a unique opportunity to own a piece of paradise while benefiting from the prestigious Meliá brand's services and amenities. 40 out of the 68 apartments will be part of a rental scheme, offering investors the chance to generate passive rental income when not in use.

The development is more than just luxury living – it's a holistic experience, complete with a commercial centre, conference venue, an array of restaurants and shops and a possible medical facility. It will also play host to Seychelles' first rooftop cocktail bar.

Conclusion: The Future of Real Estate

Branded residences are reshaping the future of luxury living and real estate investment. For those looking to combine the privacy of home ownership with the prestige and service of globally recognised brands, these properties offer the best of both worlds. The growth of branded residences as a product set signals a shift in what affluent buyers value: they are no longer just purchasing a property, they are investing in a lifestyle, a legacy, and an exclusive experience.

As more developments like The Residences at Meliá Seychelles come to market, the appeal of branded residences will only continue to grow.



For more information on The Residences at Meliá Seychelles visit www.theresidencesatmeliaseychelles.com

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A Journey through the history of maps (1482-1830)

Ministry for Fisheries and Blue Economy

Date: From 7 November through 20 January 2025

Venue: National Library, Victoria

Join us at the National library on an unforgettable journey into the past to discover the history of Seychelles through a unique curation of maps and marine artefacts celebrating the marine heritage of our islands from their very beginnings. We invite you to explore Seychelles through the eyes of the first intrepid mariners who braved the vast unknown to give birth to the magnificent cartography that placed Seychelles on the map of a young world gradually becoming aware of itself. Accompany us on a thrilling journey through history, the first of its kind in the Indian Ocean.

A truly epic voyage through time!



Virtual tourism activities and technology

Date: 29 January 2025

Venue: Anse Boileau

The main purpose of International Conference on Virtual tourism activities and technology is to bring industry professionals, experts, academicians, and scholars to discuss their expertise for better collaboration in the field.



Domestic tourism and economy

Date: 20 March 2025

Venue: Anse Boileau

The objective of International Conference on Domestic tourism and economy is to discuss emerging fields, peasant scarious, and future developments in the subjects. It brings all the top scientists, researchers, scholars, and professionals into one platform for extensive debates. You can gain knowledge, present unique researchers, and create professional networks in various fields.



Seychelles Eco-Friendly Marathon

Date: 25 February 2025

Venue: Beau Vallon, Mahé

First time held in 2008, the Seychelles Eco-Friendly Marathon is very challenging yet a highly rewarding run. Envisioned as the scenic event that contributes to Seychellois' health and brings Seychellois and visitors together. Participants can enjoy the natural beauty of Mahé Island as they run, jog or walk along the beaches. Whether you are running the full marathon, half-marathon or one of the shorter distances, this exotic trail will enchant you. The race starts at Beau Vallon Beach and follows the peninsula round to Victoria before turning to follow the same route back to the finish. The Seychelles Eco-Friendly Marathon is also recognised internationally through the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) label.

Thai Pongal Festival

Date: 14 January 2025

Venue: Colombo, Kandy and Batticaloa

This festival commemorates the harvest, with special thanks given to the Sun God for a plentiful harvest. A particular dish known as *Pongal* is cooked with newly harvested rice, lentils, and jaggery.

The house doors are decorated with colourful *kolams* (rice flour-based ornamental designs), and family gather to pray and celebrate with traditional music and dance.

The city's streets are decorated and lined with food vendors selling traditional Thai Pongal meals. The Grand Thai Pongal Procession, held on the fourth day of the festival, involves floats, dancers, and musicians and concludes with a bonfire.

Kandy's Hindu temples are the focal point of the celebration, with rituals and festivities taking place over four days.

Batticaloa, a seaside city in Eastern Sri Lanka, has beaches lined with booths offering traditional Tamil food, and concerts are scheduled over the four days. The Grand Thai Pongal firework display, held on the penultimate night of the festival, is the centrepiece.



National Day of Sri Lanka

Date: 4 February 2025

Venue: All around Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka's National Day is marked by official celebrations and military parades. The principal events are held in Colombo, when the President hoists the national flag and gives a nationally televised speech.

The President summarises the government's successes during the previous year, acknowledges critical challenges, and invites the public to join him in commemorating this historic day. The President also honours Sri Lanka's national heroes with a two-minute silence.

In addition to commemorating the country's independence, National Day is a day to honour Sri Lanka's national heroes, both past and present.

In commemoration of these warriors, two minutes of silence is observed during the presidential address.

Up the Creek

Date: 6-9 February 2025

Venue: Swellendam, Cape Town

Up the Creek is South Africa's second longest-running outdoor music festival, having been established in 1990. Set yearly on the banks of the magnificent Breede River, around 23 kilometres from Swellendam in the Western Cape.

For three decades, it has blazed a trail in the South African music festival circuit by providing a smaller, more intimate experience limited to 3,000 attendees. Along with live music, there will be tasty cuisine, short lines, and plenty of gees.

Enjoy four days of amazing live music, good cuisine, relaxed vibes, short lines, and plenty of gees.



Tel Aviv Samsung Marathon

Date: 28 February 2025

Venue: Rokach Boulevard, Tel Aviv

The Tel Aviv Samsung Marathon is a premier sporting event held in one of the most fascinating Mediterranean towns.

This year's marathon course includes a full marathon, half marathon, 10 kilometres, 5 kilometres, and a Kids Mini Marathon. The event will also feature a 42 kilometres Handcycle race for those with special needs.

Marathon runners will enjoy a spectacular route along the beach and through Tel Aviv's main streets, an official UNESCO World Heritage Site, providing a unique experience.



Joburg Film Festival

Date: 11-16 February 2025

Venue: Johannesburg

The event is scheduled to run from Tuesday, 11 February to Sunday, 16 February 2025. It brings together filmmakers, industry experts, and film aficionados to celebrate storytelling via the medium of film.

It is produced by MultiChoice in collaboration with Absa and will highlight and reward excellence in filmmaking. As South Africa will celebrate, the festival will represent innovation, excellence, and intentional creativity, as well as a desire to promote and contribute to cultural tourism not only in Johannesburg and Gauteng, but throughout South Africa.

Mauritius National Day

Date: 12 March 2025

Venue: All around Mauritius

Mauritius' Independence Day commemorates two significant milestones in the country's recent history, both of which occurred on 12 March: independence from Britain in 1968 and establishing a republic in 1992.

The colourful flag is displayed all across the island at this time of year in businesses, residences, schools, government buildings, and local communities congregate for modest celebrations across the country.



Holi

Date: 14 March 2025

Venue: Mumbai, India

Holi, also known as the festival of sharing and love or the festival of colours, is a Hindu two-day spring festival. Every year, the celebration is held in the months of February and March, with the first day being known as *Chhoti Holi* or *Holika Dahan* and the second as *Dhuleti* or *Rangwali Holi*.

The festival commemorates Radha Krishna's eternal and holy love and is observed in practically every corner of the country. The ritual begins with the lighting of the bonfire one day before Holi, and this process represents the triumph of good over evil. On Holi, people play with colours with their friends and families, and in the evening, they display love and affection to their close ones with *Abeer*, the traditional name for the colourful powders used in several Hindu rites, particularly the Holi celebration.

International Conference on Tourism, Transport, and Logistics

Date: 29-30 March 2025

Venue: Malé, Maldives

The conference's goal is to bring together scientists, academics, engineers, and students from universities all over the world and the industry to present active research efforts, thereby fostering research links between universities and industry. This conference allows delegates for a face-to-face exchange of fresh ideas and application experiences, create business or research relationships and future collaboration.



The future of real-time visibility



Ambient wireless tags and sensors are geared to change how businesses track and monitor their operations, delivering unprecedented visibility across several industries. These small, low-power gadgets employ radio frequency (RF) and other wireless communication technologies to collect data from their surroundings and communicate it without the need for direct human participation. They have an ability to mix effortlessly into spaces

Key features and benefits

It is the process of continuously collecting, analysing, and displaying data as it is created. It is used for monitoring systems, processes, or surroundings to make sure that they are operational and efficient. For businesses like logistics and supply chain management, this means receiving an accurate, live feed of items as they progress through various stages of distribution.

Sensors, equipment, or software collect data as it occurs (for example, temperature sensors and financial transactions). The collected data is then transferred to a central system for processing. The system analyses the data in real-time, frequently employing algorithms or rules to detect patterns, trends, or problems. If something uncommon occurs (for example, a machine overheating), the system will be able to generate alerts or will automatically take action by sending notifications or shutting down the equipment. Dashboards, graphs, or

charts display real-time data, allowing users to readily track what is going on. For example: In a factory, real-time monitoring could be used to check machine temperatures. If the temperature rises too high, the device delivers an instant alarm, allowing operators to respond before the equipment is destroyed.

Enhanced efficiency

These sensors enable organisations to monitor activities in real-time, reducing human tracking errors and improving decision-making processes. For example, in warehouses, they can automatically check inventory levels and provide restocking warnings as needed.

They allow enterprises to monitor situations in real-time from anywhere without having to be physically present. This helps prevent problems (such as overheating) from occurring. Sensors can automatically perform activities such as turning off equipment or altering settings (for example, turning on an air conditioner if the room becomes too hot).

Reduces operational costs

These gadgets continuously collect data, allowing organisations to analyse patterns over time and optimise operations. For example, understanding energy use patterns can aid in waste reduction. Wireless sensors lower operational costs by avoiding problems (such as equipment failure) and optimising operations (such as energy use). Their application results in lower operational costs by reducing human error and optimising the use of resources.

Wireless sensors can monitor machines, foresee faults, and schedule maintenance. By continuously monitoring temperature and humidity, these sensors can direct systems such as HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) to function only when needed, saving energy and lowering utility bills. It can detect equipment defects early on, allowing for preventive maintenance and to avoid costly breakdowns or repairs. They automate monitoring operations, removing the need



for manual inspections and lowering labour expenses. Sensors can save money by monitoring conditions such as temperature in storage facilities (for example, food or pharmaceuticals).

Sustainability

Ambient sensors frequently use energy-efficient technology, such as solar power or kinetic energy whereby, they can operate for longer durations without regular battery replacements.

These wireless sensors allow for monitoring and control energy consumption in real-time. They reduce energy waste by automating systems such as heating, cooling, and lighting to only function when necessary. These tags assist

in reducing waste by tracking environmental conditions (such as humidity and temperature) in storage or operational situations. For example, they ensure that food or sensitive materials are stored in optimal conditions, preventing spoiling and product loss. Real-time monitoring of operations such as HVAC systems, machinery operation, and electricity use helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to a smaller carbon footprint.

The procured data assists organisations in identifying operational inefficiencies, allowing for more sustainable practices such as minimising material usage and optimising supply chains. Real-time machinery aids in making equipment last longer with fewer replacements, reducing resource consumption and waste from old parts.

Industries using these



Hospitals utilise RFID tags to track medical equipment, monitor patient conditions, and provide real-time asset availability updates



The use of ambient wireless tags and sensors represents a shift towards a smarter, more connected industry. As the technology gets more widely adopted, its capacity to provide real-time insights will assist organisations in optimising their operations, reducing waste, and improving operational efficiency



Ambient sensors aid in inventory control by transmitting data on product movement and positioning in retail stores



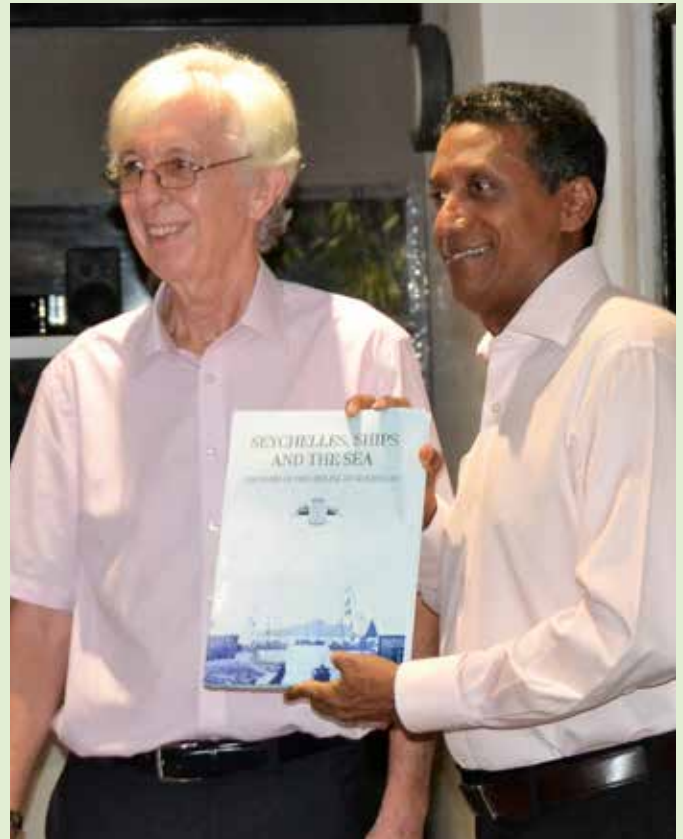
In agriculture, farmers use wireless tags to monitor soil moisture and temperature, optimising water and resource usage

Interview with Adrian Skerrett

Silhouette interviews Adrian Skerrett, Chairman of Corvina Investment Company and Island Conservation Society of Seychelles. He is also an author of a number of books and innumerable articles about Seychelles and its natural history.



IMAGES COURTESY OF ADRIAN SKERRETT



Adrian Skerrett with Danny Faure, the former president of Seychelles

Q: You were born in UK, but have lived in Seychelles for most of your life. What is the best thing about life in Seychelles?

A: There are so many opportunities. In UK as a birdwatcher, I would probably have been just one of a million members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. But in Seychelles I have had the opportunity to write a definitive guide to the birds of the country, founded the Seychelles Bird Records Committee and been the founding Chair of the principal conservation NGO of the country. Likewise, in business, there are many opportunities and I've been fortunate enough to team up with some very talented local partners.

Q: How did you come to live in Seychelles in the first place?

A: I have always been a keen ornithologist and as a youngster, I read about these remarkable islands where some of the world's rarest species were confined to just one or two islands. I later obtained a degree in Economics from Liverpool University and qualified as an accountant in private business. But life seemed rather humdrum and the idea of experiencing somewhere like Seychelles, with islands of legendary beauty became very appealing. My wife-to-be, Judith, introduced me to someone who had just returned to UK after two years in Seychelles. He gave me a telephone directory and I wrote to every address that I thought might need an accountant. I got just one reply with a job offer, but that was enough to get me to Seychelles in 1980, on a two-year contract as Group Accountant for Mahe Shipping.

Q: Two years obviously became considerably more, was that always the plan?

A: No, not all. Seychelles is small and I wanted to see more of the world. After three years, Judith and I actually left Seychelles, having bought a boat in UK with the idea of sailing around the world. The Chairman of Mahe Shipping, himself a sailor, suggested we sailed our boat via Seychelles, and he would keep my job open for as long as I wanted. So that's what we did and upon our return, we found the owners of Mahe Shipping had decided to sell. We sold our boat and along with two other local managers we bought the company. I became Managing Director of the Company and Seychelles became our home.

Q: How did you become a writer?

A: By accident. One day back in 1989, Volume One Number One of *Silhouette*, the new inflight magazine of Air Seychelles produced by Camerapix Magazines, landed on my desk. The layout and the photography were superb but the text was full of mistakes. I wrote a letter to the Publisher, Mohamed Amin, saying, "It is a pity that the excellent production was spoiled by sheer fantasy in the text", quoting several examples. I didn't expect a reply, but three weeks later there was a knock on my office door. "Hi, my name is Mohamed Amin from Camerapix, I got your letter". Oh dear, I thought, did I need to be quite so sarcastic? However, Mohamed had taken my letter in good spirit had checked out all the points I'd queried and found out I was right. "I'm planning to produce a guidebook on the country and I need a local partner, would you like to join the project?"

Q: How do you see the future of these islands, of which your organisation is the custodian, in 25 years?

A: In 25 years, I hope that our islands, both inner and outer, have grown more resilient, with long-term and sustainable solutions in place. Through evidence-based management and scientific research define these solutions, and develop initiatives to improve our chances of mitigating climate change implications.

Science-based initiatives, like the eradication of invasive species for biodiversity preservation, will play a crucial role in our future as natural heritage custodians where we will reap the benefits or face the consequences not just in 25 years, but even much sooner than that.

My vision is hopeful because I believe in science and I believe in our capacity to make the right decisions, and our ability to make the right coalitions to collaborate for the future. Our natural heritage will continue to thrive, with the necessary measures identified and implemented and not only this it will remain the source of our wealth today and tomorrow if we work and ensure their protection and preservation.

Q: Many of your works are joint ventures with others, especially your wife, what are your favourite subjects to write about?

A: My main field of interest is natural history whilst Judith is a historian. She is a much better writer than me but tends to get some facts and figures mixed up, which are an accountant's department. So, between us we cover

the whole spectrum of subject material about Seychelles, hopefully in both a well-written and accurate format. With Mohamed Amin and Camerapix providing most of the images, we produced guidebooks (*Spectrum Guide to Seychelles* and *Beauty of Seychelles*), guides to both birds and to plants of Seychelles and several coffee table books, including *Journey Through Seychelles*, *Aldabra* and *Outer Islands of Seychelles* and *Seychelles*. We have also written between us more than 100 articles for *Silhouette* magazine.

Q: What business activities are you involved with in Seychelles?

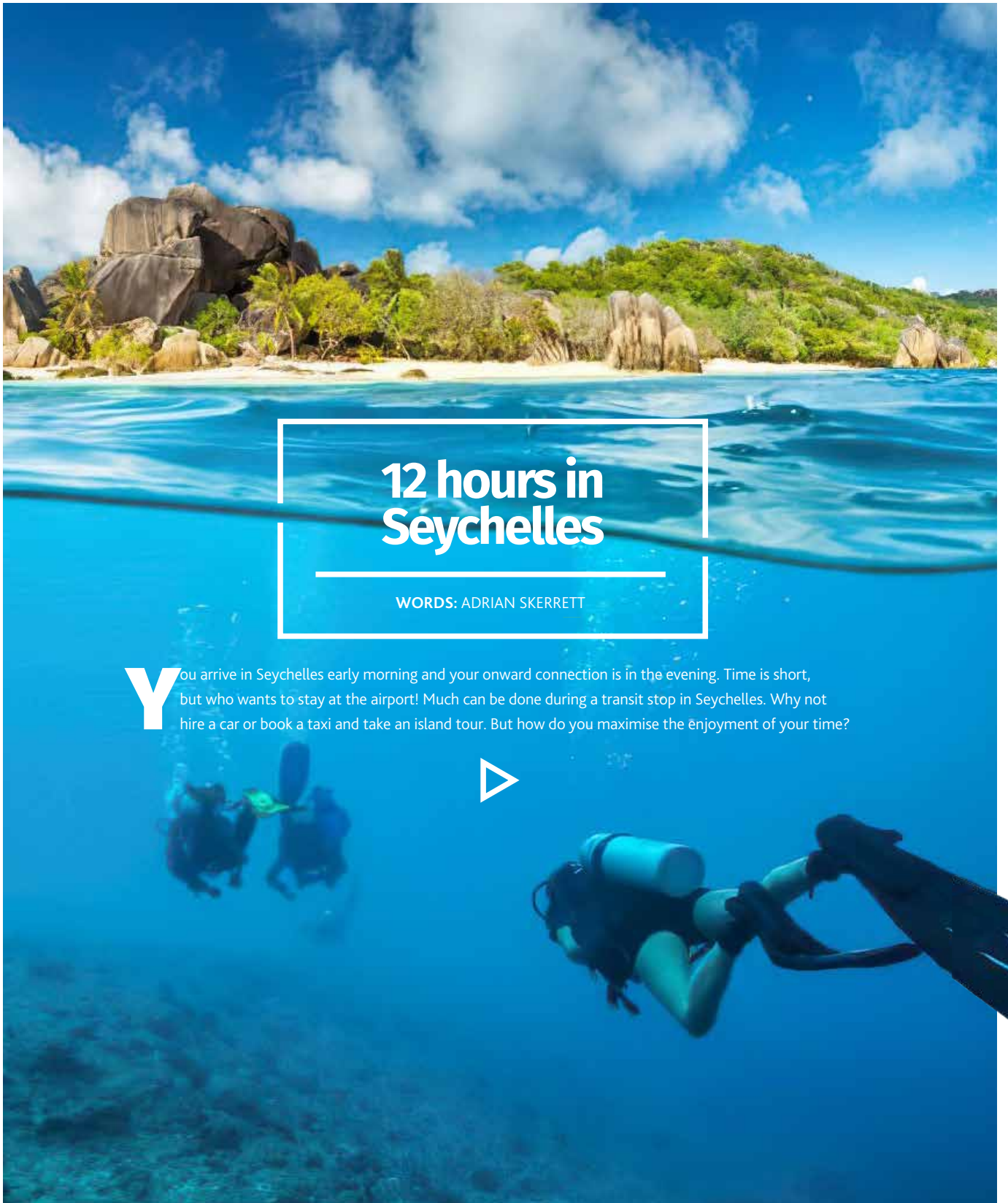
A: Mahe Shipping is still going strong. We merged with other groups of companies in 1998 and in 2019 to form Corvina, probably the largest 100% Seychelles-owned group in Seychelles. Then in 2019, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of Mahe Shipping with the launch of a book on maritime history, *Seychelles, Ships and the Sea*, again published by Camerapix.

Q: In 2001, you became the founding Chairman of Island Conservation Society, why did you feel a new conservation organisation was needed in Seychelles?

A: I have sailed to every island of Seychelles. On some of the remote islands I felt an immense sense of privilege to be able to experience some of the most beautiful tropical islands in the world combined with a sense of foreboding that poachers were ravaging these islands taking turtles, birds and eggs with impunity. I visited the Ministry of Environment to try to stimulate interest in improving conservation endeavours in the outer islands with little result. I visited Glenny Savy, CEO of Islands Development Company (IDC) which held the key to the Outer Islands. "Adrian this is music to my ears", said Glenny. "The copra industry is dead and that is not such a bad thing because we have raised wages beyond what is competitive in the industry. The future belongs to economic activities with higher value for Seychellois and that means ecotourism and protection of the environment". Others, notably, Gerard Rocamora and Rolph Payet shared this sentiment so together we founded the Island Conservation Society (ICS). We now have conservation centres throughout the islands and more staff engaged in conservation work than any other body in Seychelles, working on islands from Aride Island Nature Reserve to the Aldabra Group.

Q: Is there a contradiction between being both a businessman and a conservationist?

A: Not at all. You are not going to save the environment by wrapping it in cotton wool. Live birds and turtles must be worth more than dead ones if they are to be protected and respected. ICS works with several hotel groups including Blue Safari, Hilton, Four Seasons and Waldorf Astoria, all of which appreciate that the environment is an asset to their hotels which visitors are willing to pay to preserve. Along with IDC, they have all been fantastic friends of conservation. Turtle and bird populations are increasing on islands where there is a conservation presence.



12 hours in Seychelles

WORDS: ADRIAN SKERRETT

You arrive in Seychelles early morning and your onward connection is in the evening. Time is short, but who wants to stay at the airport! Much can be done during a transit stop in Seychelles. Why not hire a car or book a taxi and take an island tour. But how do you maximise the enjoyment of your time?



Scuba diving

The beautiful south

South Mahé is much quieter than the north. Turn left out of the airport complex and drive through Anse aux Pins to the Craft Village, a super place to browse for souvenirs. The coast road continues south, rising over the promontory of Fairyland before descending to Anse Royale, an excellent spot for swimming and snorkelling. At the opposite end of Anse Royale village, Les Canelles Road crosses the island to the west coast. Take this and look out for Jardin du Roi, a replica of the Royal Spice Garden founded nearby in 1772, with spice plants smuggled from the East Indies. Crossing to the west coast, Anse a la Mouche offers shallow, calm waters ideal for swimming, though you need to wade out a long way at low tide. Drive north along the west coast through the old coconut plantation of Barbarons and take the La Misere Road back over the island enjoying spectacular views of both coasts.

Visit Victoria

Victoria is 10 minutes north of the airport. The Clock Tower is at the centre and is the best place to get your bearings. Albert Street leads towards Beau Vallon Rue Pierre de Possession to the airport, State House Avenue leads inland to the President's office and Independence Avenue towards the sea. Nearby is a water fountain, topped with a tiny replica statue of Queen Victoria. Another historical monument faces towards the mountains, a bust of Pierre Poivre, the Governor of Mauritius who founded a spice garden in Seychelles. The History Museum is on the corner of Independence Avenue near the Clock Tower. The Natural History Museum is on the opposite side



The Craft Village at Domaine de Val Prés, South Mahé



The Clock Tower Victoria, Mahé – Seychelles



Le Jardin du Roi Spice Garden, Mahé

of Independence Avenue near to the Post Office. St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral is on the corner of Albert Street and Royal Street, Seychelles' oldest church when consecrated in 1859. Further along Albert Street is a junction with Market Street, a pedestrianised zone except for vehicles delivering produce to the Sir Selwyn Selwyn-Clarke Market, which is always lively during working hours. Church Street leads from Market Street to the Roman Catholic Cathedral, one of Victoria's most impressive buildings, and the Catholic Priests' Residence, Capuchin House, next door.

Discover botanical wonders

On the southern edge of Victoria are the Botanical Gardens. There is a car park to the right of the entrance. A small fee for entry is payable here. From here the tarmac path leads uphill. The site was laid out in 1901 by Rivaltz Dupont who collected many of the plant specimens during his travels. He converted tangled undergrowth covered in granite boulders into the serene grounds of today, creating a cool, peaceful atmosphere between two babbling streams. The path leads past the roots of an impressive banyan tree and several cannonball Trees, with their strange, fleshy red flowers. A short detour uphill leads to the Orchid Garden, a pleasant spot to take a breather.

Head for the hills

The green mountains of Morne Seychellois National Park make a refreshing contrast with the town. To reach the largest National Park in Seychelles, take the Sans Souci Road from Victoria, noting Seychelles' oldest cemetery just 100 metres along the road. Here lie some of the pioneers of Seychelles history, including the corsair Hodoul and the Seychelles 'Giant'; so much feared by early settlers they poisoned him. Continuing uphill, the road passes Thoughts Stained Glass Studio, where beautiful souvenirs may be purchased. The road winds upward with endemic palms, trees and screwpines on either side. After the summit the main road dips then rises to Mission Historical Ruins and Viewing Point. Little remains of what was originally called Venn's Town; a boarding school run by missionaries for the children of the liberated Africans who were brought to Seychelles after 1861 but the views are incredible and the atmosphere memorable.



Morne Seychellois National Park

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Keep the kids happy

Seychelles is family-friendly: though there are no amusement parks or sophisticated playgrounds, young children will enjoy the colours of Victoria's market, Beau Vallon beach and the Craft Village. The Giant tortoises at the Botanical Gardens will fascinate them whilst older children may relish pirate tales inspired by the old cemetery and the museums. Beau Vallon, with its watersport facilities is best for the adventurous child, but you can't beat a swim at a beautiful palm-fringed beach such as Anse a la Mouche.

Food for thought

There are ample opportunities to enjoy local cuisine along the way. Anchor Café at Anse a la Mouche offers drinks and snacks in simple surroundings. Marie Antoinette Restaurant, overlooking Victoria, is the best for a Creole feast. The rustic Boat House at Beau Vallon offers an excellent menu highlighting the very best of Seychelles fish. If by now you have one eye on your watch as check-in time nears, head for Eden Island just a few minutes from the airport. Here you can choose from the extensive menu at the Boardwalk, where there will be something to appeal to any taste or appetite or for something more exotic, there is first class Indian food at Maharajas.



Creole feast



The giant tortoise is endemic to the Seychelles



Trees of life

WORDS: STEEN G. HANSEN





Most visitors to the tropics are probably already familiar with the coconut palm – the icon and indisputable image of the tropics. Swaying palms over golden beaches, reaching out for the inviting clear, turquoise blue lagoon water, and a refreshing coconut decorated with a straw and a deep red hibiscus flower for drinking along the roadside. Some may have heard the term 'Tree of Life' being linked to the coconut palm. But how many have actually thought more deeply about what this mandatory designation actually covers – the 'Tree of Life'. So, let's take a few minutes to have a closer look at this almost unbelievable and outstanding distinction for a tropical plant, which is truly extraordinary and remarkable in many ways.

According to a statement based on a final DNA test sponsored by the National Geographic Society (UK) in 2011, the coconut palm originates from 'India and Southeast Asia'. However, and due to the buoyant husk surrounding the nuts, they can float for quite a long time and over distances, and are viable for a month or so. Thus, the coconut is today found on almost every subtropical and tropical shores.

The coconut palm is arguably the most useful plant in the world, for which reason it already in its area of origin and in the Sanskrit (Hinduism's primary sacred language) was known as *kalpa vriksha* meaning 'tree which gives all that is necessary for living' – a statement that has been passed on throughout Oceania, where it now commonly known as the 'Tree of Life'. In other words, the coconut can be used in countless ways. Each and every part of the tree is useful, and the human uses and products obtained from this species are just mind-boggling.

However, the harvest is critical for both immediate usage and subsequent processing, as is the period for collecting the nuts. A timely harvest is critical for the quality of several immediate uses (fresh coconut water and fresh white meat) as well as future derivative products such as copra, coconut oil, coconut milk, coconut cream and coconut powder. There are

three ways to gather coconuts, the two most frequent being the 'climbing method' and the 'pole method'.

Using the climbing method, the nuts are usually harvested before they are fully ripe, and skilled workers are typically used to climb trees. (On a minor scale though, some farmers in Thailand and Malaysia use trained pig-tailed macaques instead of humans). If not climbing the tree directly, ladders or hydraulic elevators on a tractor are frequently being used. Latest, automated robots have been developed in countries such as India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia to do the harvesting job. However, either of the mentioned 'climbing'– methods is the dominant way of collecting coconuts in the majority of the world's coconut-producing regions.

The 'pole method' uses a long shaft or a bamboo stick usually with a cutting device at the end – e.g. a sickle-like blade mounted at the tip (popular in the Philippines).

The third and last way of harvesting coconuts is simply leaving the nuts to become fully ripe and then 'picking them up from the ground' when they fall by themselves – a preferred method in e.g. Papua New Guinea and Seychelles. The benefit of letting the fruits ripe fully on the tree is obviously safer for the climbers and requires less equipment. On the other hand, letting the nuts to fully ripen is thought to improve the quality of the coconut water and the white flesh (the kernel), although mature fruits have significantly less liquid than young, immature nuts.

With the coconut in your hand, having had it de-husked and opened, the first thing you would notice, is the lovely water inside the nut. The coconut water is a blessing to man. Apart from quenching your thirst and providing a variety of nutrients, it is widely used in cooking, vinaigrette dressings, a base for smoothies, enhancing homemade juice, or just a substitute for plain water. Most surprising, though, is the apparent positive impact on your health. Coconut water has been shown to have anti-oxidant and thus cell-protective properties; to help lower blood sugar; to help prevent



kidney stones; to support heart, bone, and digestive health; to aid in weight loss; and, as previously stated, to have anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and anti-fungal properties that aid in wound healing. Finally, it has a positive effect when inverted on piles (haemorrhoids) and is well-known for its ability to relieve sunstroke when inverted on the forehead. That was, however, just the coconut water. The dried coconut meat (the copra), the coconut oil and milk, the roots, the stems, the leaves, the apical tip, the shell, and even the young baby coconuts, from a medicinal point of view together with salt rubbed on fungal infections has an anti-fungal effect.

As said, every part of the coconut palm can be used. Apart from the valued culinary and medicinal uses, the tree is very versatile, when it comes to 'other' uses e.g. timber is used for construction (the trunks); for thatching roofs, securing walls and fences, climbing frames and meeting rooms, making hats, bags, mats, fans, and wedding marquees (the leaves); floating device (the husk); as dish or body sponges, *corda-ges*/hemp, mats, doormats, brushes, caulking boats, stuffing fibre for mattresses and automobile seats, in broom making, as filters in drainage pipes, as part of particle boards – and as a popular fuel for barbecues (the coir – fibrous part of the husk); as ingredients in pharmaceuticals including *ayurvedic* oils, candles, soaps and to a lesser extent to be used as a lubricant (coconut oil). Although the above only is a sneaky peek inside a true and impressive catalogue of ingenuity with regard to man's everyday use, it really gives food for thought.

No wonder that today's global market for coconut and derived products for many reasons is booming. Following a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development statement from 2014 'the world market's coconut oil production has been on the increase for the past decades'. Times of India (an Indian news platform) can as late as 2024 in an update announced that 'the global demand for coconuts and coconut-derived products has surged in recent years valued at USD 20.24 billion in 2022

and is more over expected to grow at an annual rate of 8.4% from 2023 to 2030. Factors driving this demand include increased awareness of coconut benefits, the popularity of plant-based diets, and adoption of veganism. Consumers seek organic coconut products due to their higher nutritional value compared to conventional agricultural foods – and low allergy risks as well. Add to this the fact that not only coconut oil is gaining popularity but also coconut milk, desiccated coconuts, coconut cream (liquid and powder), and coconut water (including the latest frozen coconut water concentrate from Sri Lanka) are in great demand across a wide range of applications including food, beverages, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. According to Aramcoworld (an Arab and Muslim intercultural magazine), coconuts, in all its processed variations – fresh, frozen and dried milk; sugar; oil; and syrup – have once again simply become a global 'it' ingredient, not restricted to niche producers, but being a profit-maker for largest food producers worldwide.



For more information, read Steen G. Hansen, Dr. Victorin F. Laboudallon & Charles Morel's book 'Coconut Palms – Trees of Life' (available at mifapublication@gmail.com), or visit the solely coconut museum in the Indian Ocean Region – located in Seychelles at Val d'Pres on Mahé Island.



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Lifeline of Bangkok

WORDS: CHRISTINE PEMBERTON



Chao Phraya Express Boat, a unique opportunity to see the city's skyline



The Chao Phraya River in Bangkok was called 'the River of Kings' by King Rama I, but don't be put off by the royal appellation. Travelling up and down this famed river in the twenty-first century does not require a king's ransom. Indeed, it is one of the cheapest and most enjoyable methods to explore the city.

Stretching over 370 kilometres from the northern plains of the country to the Gulf of Thailand, the river has played a crucial role in the history, culture, and daily life of the Thai people for centuries. The river is a busy highway, with elegant hotel shuttles outfitted in solar 'topis' and colonial-era tropical clothing, as well as local ferries, ponderous cargo-laden barges, and colourful longtail boats racing up and down the canals.

Today, the Chao Phraya River remains a bustling waterway that is central to the lives of millions of Bangkok residents. It serves as a crucial transportation route, with ferries, long-tail boats, and river taxis providing an essential alternative to the congested roads of Bangkok. The river's express boat services connect various parts of the city, allowing locals and tourists alike to navigate Bangkok efficiently while enjoying scenic views.

Canals, known as 'klongs,' branch off the river, and wooden shacks lean precariously over the water, where palaces, temples, old hotels, new hotels, brand new condominiums, and soon-to-be-even-newer condominiums are under development blending the old with the new. Yet, traditional wooden houses, floating markets, and riverside communities still thrive, offering a glimpse into the city's rich heritage. In other words, there is an entire world to view along the banks of this famous river.

A great way to witness life on and along the Chao Phraya is to board one of the local ferries that travel this evocative river and enjoy a long, local commute. The ferries bring everyone up and down, including schoolchildren, monks, office workers, and other tourists.

Boats use different coloured flags to mark their path, however the boat with no flag offers the greatest deal. This local line stops at all piers from Wat Rajsingkorn, (Pier S1) in the south and Nonthabury (N30) in the north. Take this ferry as it will go, then purchase a return ticket and return. There's no better way to experience river life.

Saphan Taksin (Taksin Bridge) is an excellent site to begin your adventure because it is one of the city's key transportation hubs, with ferries, hotel shuttles, the BTS Skytrain and cross-river shuttles are all available.



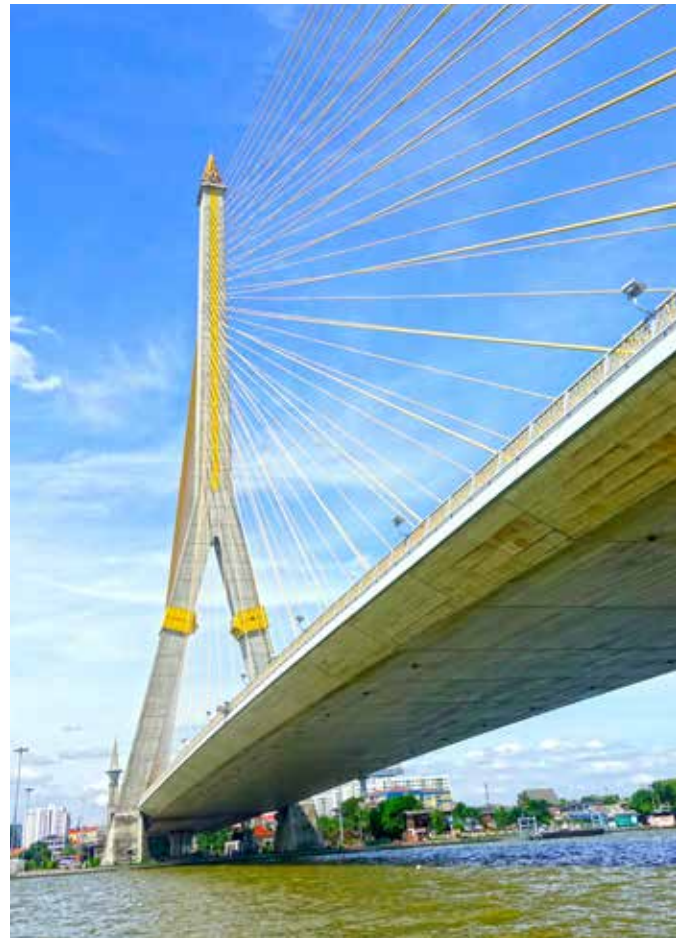
Explore

As your boat leaves the crowded wharf and heads north, one of Bangkok's most prominent complexes, Icon Siam, will be directly on your left. The stately Mandarin Oriental, the doyenne of Bangkok hotels, sits across the river from the gleaming new towers, adding to the city's contrasts. The hotel has been repaired and enlarged over the years, but the original edifice was Thailand's first hotel, opening in 1876.

The scenery unfolds on both sides of the river as your boat rushes to the docks to drop off and pick up passengers, scarcely pausing for breath before returning upriver. Depending on the water traffic, your boat will either come to a halt at the dock or make its way through the water traffic gridlock with whistles and shouting. After only a brief pause, your boat will be back in the water, speeding through the river traffic. Wat Pathum Khongkha Ratchaworawihan, with its characteristic upward-curving roof, is visible to your right. With all of the high-rises, boats, and bustle, it's difficult to realise that when King Rama IV erected this temple in 1857, there were only paddy fields here.

Wat Arun, or Temple of Dawn, is located on the left bank of the river a bit further upstream. This lovely Wat is on every visitor's 'To Do' list, therefore there is constantly a swarm of boats of various sizes and shapes enthusiastically transporting devout and tourists alike. If you have the time now, why not get off the ferry and see this wonderful temple.

Wat Arun stands out in Bangkok for its Khmer-style central tower. It's a joyful, buzzing location with a charming unusual feature: the towers are covered with bright china and seashells that were once used as ballast by vessels sailing from China to Bangkok. After you've climbed up and down the extremely steep flights of steps (You have been warned!) You can return to the jetty and take the next ferry travelling north, up the river.



Rama VIII Cable Bridge



Bangkok's floating markets date back to the 19th century



Wat Arun, also known as the Temple of Dawn

As the boat swings back into the crowded river, prepare to be astounded by the magnificent sight of the Grand Palace, which is almost beside Wat Arun on the right bank. This magnificent royal palace, with its sparkling roofs and pagodas, has served as the official residence of the Kings of Siam (later Thailand) from 1782. It is another must-see location, so if you feel up to it, get off the ferry again or wait until another day to visit. The view from the river is unique and nearly mystical, so enjoy it.

The ferry zigzags across the river, dropping off residents and schoolchildren, and as you move north, the boat progressively empties. Wats (temples) border both banks of the river; you pass the adorable small 18th-century Phra Sumen Fort, and then, in complete contrast, you float under the new Rama VIII bridge, which is majestic and pared-down in appearance. When the ferry arrives at Nonthaburi, its final stop, you must disembark; however, before you depart for the return ferry or explore the neighbourhood, remember to feed the fish.

Yup, you read that right. Don't forget to feed the fish.

The Nonthaburi pier is well-known for the hundreds of catfish that swim leisurely around before exploding into a feeding frenzy once people lean over the jetty to feed them. Bags of multicoloured fish pellets are available for purchase on the ferry pier, and feeding the fish earns you merit. It's also a great way to pass the time until the return boat arrives, which is far more enjoyable than gazing at your phone.

Then, all too soon, it's time to go back on board and head south. From the images of daily Bangkok life, as the boat moves downstream, the sparkling spires and domes appear, the crowds pile up, and by the time your ferry plunges into the maelstrom of boats loading and unloading at Saphan Taksin, you'll have enjoyed your time along the River of Kings.

Despite its importance, the Chao Phraya River confronts numerous environmental issues. Rapid urbanisation, industrialisation, and population increase have resulted in pollution and deterioration of water quality.

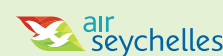
The Thai government and numerous non-governmental organisations have worked to solve these issues through clean-up campaigns, stronger restrictions, and public awareness programmes.

Furthermore, the river is prone to seasonal floods, causing major disruption in Bangkok and the neighbouring areas. Climate change and rising sea levels offer additional concerns, making managing the Chao Phraya River an increasingly difficult challenge for city planners.

The Chao Phraya River is undoubtedly a big attraction for travellers visiting Bangkok. River cruises provide a unique opportunity to see the city's skyline, especially at night when temples and skyscrapers are illuminated. Dinner cruises let you to savour traditional Thai food while gliding past the city's landmarks.

The river also hosts numerous floating markets, including the Taling Chan Floating Market, where tourists may experience traditional Thai trade by purchasing fresh vegetables, snacks, and handicrafts from vendors on boats.

The Chao Phraya River is more than just a river; it is the heart of Bangkok and continues to provide a source of life and livelihood for millions. The problems it faces necessitate concerted measures to preserve its viability and vibrancy in Bangkok's future. As Bangkok grows and evolves, the Chao Phraya River will definitely remain important to the city's identity and energy, acting as a continual reminder of its rich history and vibrant present.



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



The vibrant, bustling capital of Sri Lanka

It is difficult to pin down what makes road trips so endearing. Is it the joy of discovering places with your loved ones or is it the deeper bond that develops due to the shared experience? Such trips can be truly transformative – meeting new people, connecting with fellow travellers, exploring offbeat sites and a hint of thrill & adventure of driving in a new country.

Not much talked about, Sri Lanka is a hidden gem in South Asia where the roads from Colombo offers unending vistas and a mind-boggling array of things to do and see. It is one such country that demands leisurely discovery, that requires days of easy wandering and needs poking into nooks and corners to discover its true soul.

A road trip from Colombo

Sigiriya-Kandy-Nuwara Eliya-Bentota-Galle

WORDS: SUGATO TRIPATHY



The Sigiriya Lion Rock

Visit the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy

Travel time from Sigiriya – 2.5 hours

The centrepiece of the lovely hill city of Kandy is the manmade lake spread across a staggering 6,544 square metres. Built-in 1807 by the last ruler of Kandy, Sri Wickrama Rajasinghe, it is the quintessential hangout place for the weary city dwellers. A pathway runs all around the lake's periphery making it the perfect setting for morning and evening strolls. However, the prominent attraction of the country lies on the northern bank of the lake – a temple which houses a tooth of Lord Buddha! One cannot actually see the tooth as it's heavily guarded inside a golden casket shaped like a stupa. The golden-roofed temple is sometimes referred to as the Vatican of the Buddhists. At the end of the temple premises amidst a lush green courtyard with intertwining pathways lies the statue of Madduma Bandara, a child hero of Sri Lankan history who showed no fear at the time of execution (1814) at the same place.

After paying your respects at the Tooth Relic Temple, drive to the impressive Bahirawakanda Buddha Statue sitting on the top of Bahirava Kanda Hill in Kandy. Located beside the Sri Maha Bodhi Temple, this 26.8 metre (88 feet) high statue is a prominent feature of Kandy's skyline. Another impressive area in the city is the spectacular Peradeniya Botanical Gardens. Spread across 147 acres, it is one of the largest landscaped gardens in Sri Lanka attracting millions of visitors each year. Also called the Royal Botanical Gardens, it boasts of more than 4,000 species of plants and houses many varieties of butterflies, reptiles and amphibians.

A slight detour on the way to the gorgeous hill station of Nuwara Eliya will take you to the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage in the town of Kegalle. Established in 1975, the Government takes care of orphaned elephants found stranded in the jungle. It's the perfect place to see the majestic beasts up close from a safe vantage point.

Climb the legendary Sigiriya Lion Rock Fortress

Travel time from Colombo – under 4 hours

One of the most fascinating landmarks of Sri Lanka is the imposing rock column of Sigiriya. Nearly 200 metres high, this humongous boulder was used by King Kasyapa (475-495 AD) to build an impregnable fortress on its top, whose access was restricted through a cave carved as a lion mouth! Ironically, the parricidal king was still defeated in 495 AD after which the place fell into neglect. The ruins of this monumental project can be accessed by an arduous two-hour climb up the monolithic rock pillar. Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982, the views from the top are spectacular. The beautiful panorama of the lush green jungles and surrounding valley from the top is worth the effort. Many of the rock paintings of celestial singers and dancers on the palace walls still remain surprisingly intact. The entry fee is also inclusive of the museum in the premises.

Around half an hour away, westwards, is another UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the Dambulla Cave Temple. It is one of the most visited sites of the country. The place is said to be of religious importance since 22 centuries and is replete with statues, shrines and mural paintings. Marking its significance with respect to Buddhist lineage and history, a giant golden statue of Lord Buddha oversees the ancient temple complex. It is considered to be the largest Buddha statue in the world in this particular posture.



Tooth Relic Temple, Kandy

Explore the ‘Little England’ of Sri Lanka – Nuwara Eliya

Travel time from Kandy – 2.5 hours

Sloping green tea gardens and colonial-style bungalows come to view as one enters Nuwara Eliya. Clouds hang like a veil over the surrounding towering hills. The feeling of an English county is complete when horses and ponies are seen running on grasslands and on the fringes of Gregory Lake. Be sure to wake up at sunrise and watch the rays seep in through the cold mist. A vantage point from any hotel’s rooftop will give a soothing view of the colonial town. Take a stroll through the endless tea gardens, trek to the beautiful Lover’s Leap Waterfall, do pedal boating in the swan-shaped boats of Gregory Lake and just walk through the by-lanes beside manicured lawns and perfect hedgerows of the town’s bungalows. For some religious fervour and Hindu legend, visit Seetha Aman Temple on the outskirts of the town. This is the only temple in Sri Lanka dedicated to Princess Sita from Hindu mythology. It is believed to have the imprint of Hanuman’s foot, the Monkey God from the ancient Hindu epic of Ramayana, who came to Sri Lanka to rescue Princess Sita, many thousand years ago!

Find imprints of Dutch history in the city of Galle

Travel time from Nuwara Eliya – 5 hours

Another UNESCO World Heritage Site in Sri Lanka is the fortified city of Galle on the southwestern coast of the country. The Portuguese founded this city in the 16th century and the Dutch developed it further in the 18th century. It is said to be the best example of European fortification in South and Southeast Asia. Galle is a well-preserved coastal city as it retains most of its original architectural form which is an intriguing amalgamation of European and South Asian influence. To appreciate its authenticity, Galle must be explored on foot. Dutch colonial buildings, old mosques /churches despite standing in stark contrast to chic cafes and upscale hotels, seem to be a natural part of the city’s tapestry.

Watch the sunset from Flag Rock, the southernmost end of the fort, admire the colonial architecture at the Dutch Reformed Church dating back to early 17th century and know about Galle’s maritime past in the Marine Archaeological Museum.

From Nuwara Eliya, take the Southern expressway route via Matalla and en route to Bentota, take slight detours to Mawella Beach, Dondra Head Lighthouse, Madiha Beach and Parrot Rock on Mirissa Beach.



The lush green tea estates of Nuwara Eliya



Bentota coastline

The Gem of the West Coast - Bentota

Travel time from Nuwara Eliya – 5 hours

After a hectic road trip along Central and Southern Sri Lanka, Bentota is the perfect place to unwind before heading back to Colombo. The country's most popular beach destination has long stretches of palm-fringed coast with rocky outcrops strewn here and there to add an artisanal touch to the monotonous landscape. Unlike the party destinations of similar beach destinations of the world, Bentota has elite and high-end properties all along the coast. No matter which one you choose to stay, the beach will be a stone's throw away. Cafes and restaurants are aplenty inland.

If vegetating on the beach or strolling along it and watching picturesque sunsets are not activities enough, one can opt to kayak on the Bentota River or visit the famous Kande Viharaya Temple. Built on top of a small hillock, it has a 48.8 metre (160 feet) tall Lord Buddha statue and a 300-year-old Bodhi tree.

Winters are the ideal time for the perfect road trip from Colombo–Sigiriya-Kandy-Nuwara Eliya-Bentota-Galle-Colombo. This route is earmarked by perennial rivers, unending beaches, picturesque mountain treks, gorgeous lakes, lovely ocean vistas, ancient forts, Buddhist viharas, sacred hill temples and mandatory elephant sightings. Sri Lanka is best explored with your own wheels!

Factfile

Best time to visit: December to March

Where to stay:

Sigiriya: Sigiriya Jungles – a beautiful 10-acre luxury property set amidst lush green landscape overlooking the rock fortress. Flower Garden Eco Village – an intimate budget resort with green and peaceful surroundings. It's a ten-minute walk from Sigiriya Rock.

Kandy: Radisson Hotel Kandy – a stylish modern property with more than 100 rooms set in the heart of Kandy. Cinnamon Citadel – a plush property with the backdrop of the Knuckles Mountain Range built on the banks of Mahaweli River. Part of the Cinnamon Hotels and Resorts, it's one of the upscale resorts in Kandy.

Nuwara Eliya: The Golden Ridge Hotel and The Bellwood Manor are the high-end properties in Nuwara Eliya offering premium luxury stay experience. Araliya Red and Araliya Green Hills hotels are at the lower end of the price spectrum and are known for their impeccable hospitality.

Bentota: Taj Bentota Resort and Spa & Sheraton Kosgoda Turtle Beach Resort are two of the many upscale beachfront properties on Bentota's coastline offering all the amenities expected from these international chains. Travellers looking for a more pocket-friendly option can opt to book at Sea Rock Villa. It's right on the edge of the beach and is known for its calm and serene atmosphere and good service.

Galle: Radisson Blu Resort, Galle provides stunning sea views from most of its rooms and has direct beach access. It ticks all the boxes as a luxury beachfront resort. The Bartizan is a Dutch colonial-era building overlooking the ramparts of the Galle Fort. The rooms on the first floor offer a beautiful view of the Indian Ocean.

What to eat & drink: Try the Banana Lassi at Ahinsa Restaurant in Sigiriya. Tuck into a popular Kandyan sour fish curry called Ambul Thiyal (fish made with dried garcinia and black pepper). Pani Walalu is a must-try – a unique sweet of Kandy made from fermented Urad Dal. Experience the colonial charm of Nuwara Eliya with a cup of its famous Black Tea. Bentota is known for its toddy (an alcoholic beverage made from coconut nectar). Try it out plain or in a cocktail called Arrack Mohito. Galle's food scene is a mix of local and Western culture. It has a thriving community of expats who are successfully running cafes, bars and restaurants serving authentic Sri Lankan, Italian, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern menus.



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Vibrant celebration

WORDS: SMRITY SMART

Chinese New Year in Mauritius is a colourful and culturally rich festival that reflects the island's varied past. Chinese culture in Mauritius plays a vital role in the country's multiculturalism.

Despite the modest number of the Sino-Mauritian community (estimated to be less than 3% of the overall population), Chinese New Year (also known as the Chinese Spring Festival) is a time when Chinese culture is celebrated on the island and is a public holiday in Mauritius. During this time of year, the country has a joyous and festive feeling.

It is a celebration commemorating the start of a new year according to the old lunisolar Chinese calendar. Observances mark the end of winter and the beginning of spring, with celebrations ranging from Chinese New Year's Eve, the evening preceding the first day of the year, to the Lantern Festival, observed on the 15th day. The first day of Chinese New Year begins on the new moon, which appears between 21 January and 20 February.

Sino-Mauritians are deeply loyal to Chinese traditions and the Chinese Spring Festival is the most important event among Sino-Mauritians on the island. The dates of the celebration are based on the Chinese lunisolar calendar rather than the Gregorian calendar. This year, the Year of the Snake, which begins on 29 January, will be celebrated, and as in past years, there will be a complete schedule of festivities to enjoy the occasion.

The Chinese Embassy generally holds a big cultural event called the Spring Festival Reception, which invites everyone in the Mauritian community to celebrate Chinese New Year. This year's reception will be themed around the 'Chinese Snake,' and will mark the start of the 'Happy Chinese New Year' celebrations in 2025.



It will be followed by the annual 'Happy New Year' Float Parade in Chinatown, which has been a tradition since 2018. The procession will begin in the Municipality of Port Louis and travel up Royal Road, passing notable monuments before ending at the Chinatown arch. It will include snake dancing troupes, a snake effigy float, the police band, and more. This highly anticipated event has become a highlight for both locals and visitors to Mauritius.



On the following days, go to the China Cultural Centre to see an amazing exhibition featuring the 12 Chinese Zodiac Signs with a modern twist. The exhibition's creative designs combine Chinese astrology, the rich snake culture, and elements of traditional celebrations such as the Spring Festival. The idea is to provide travellers with a fascinating representation of how Chinese people celebrate festivals. It will also put on a spectacular display to add to the joyful atmosphere for all of the attendees.

A cultural extravaganza will be held in front of the Municipality of Port Louis to celebrate the Year of the Snake, with the performing Arts Troupe and local Mauritian artists collaborating to present a stunning cultural spectacle. Enjoy the lively spirit of spring at the Malls, Le Caudan Waterfront, So'Flo Mall, & Tribeca Mall.

Spring cleaning in residences takes place the week before New Year's Day. Leading up to the Chinese New Year, Mauritians of Chinese heritage extensively clean their homes to ward off any ill luck from the previous year. Homes are frequently decked with crimson lanterns, couplets, and other traditional decorations that represent prosperity and good fortune.

Prior to the reunion dinner, a prayer of appreciation is said to commemorate the safe passage of the previous year. Confucianists use the occasion to honour their forefathers, and those who came before them are revered. Because of the impact of Christianity, some people refrain from offering a Buddhist prayer in favour of a Christian one.

On New Year's Eve, traditionalists gather at pagodas to make offerings and pray. A large family supper is held as is customary in China. While the family supper was historically held at the home of the oldest family members, going to restaurants for New Year's Eve is becoming more popular; some restaurants may also host special dinners across the island to encourage Sino-Mauritians to reunite with their families.

The supper includes a variety of traditional delicacies, such as fish (which represents abundance and wealth), dumplings, rice cakes, and sweets. The New Year's Eve feast is lavish and traditional, with courses of meat (specifically, hog and chicken) and fish. Most reunion dinners include a communal hot pot, which is thought to symbolise the family members' gathering together for the meal. Other traditional dishes include noodles, fruits, spring rolls, and Tangyuan, commonly known as sweet rice balls. Each food offered during the Chinese New Year represents something unique.

Firecrackers and fireworks are fired to fend off evil spirits and welcome the new year with vigour. Some families visit local temples many hours before midnight to pray for luck by lighting the first incense of the year. Today, many households host parties. Traditionally, firecrackers were used to scare away evil spirits. During the 'opening the door of fortune' ritual, household doors are sealed and not reopened until the following morning. Shousui refers to the tradition of staying up late on Chinese New Year's Eve. It is still practiced and believed to improve parental longevity. Red envelopes (Ang Pao): Elders offer young people red envelopes filled with money to indicate good luck and ward off evil spirits. After New Year's Eve dinner, many young people go to nightclubs.



Chinese lanterns



Chinese dragon parade, 2024



Chinese dumplings

Another common habit is to decorate windows and doors with crimson paper cut outs and couplets. These paper-cuts and couplets frequently feature themes of good fortune or happiness, money, and longevity. Other festivities include exploding firecrackers and distributing money in red envelopes.

During the annual Spring Festival, a mythical beast known as the Nian (a beast that lives under the sea or in the mountains) was said to usher in Chinese New Year. The Nian ate residents, particularly children, in the middle of the night. One year, the entire village chose to hide from the beast. An elder guy emerged before the villagers went into hiding, claiming that he would stay the night and exact retribution on the Nian. The old man hung up red papers and set out firecrackers. The following day, the people returned to their town and discovered that nothing had been destroyed.

During the Song dynasty, individuals began to offer money to youngsters in celebration of the New Year. The money was known as sui nian, which translates to 'age-based money.' In the chapter 'Ending of a Year' of Wulin Jiushi, the emperor's concubines prepared one hundred and twenty coins for princes and princesses to wish them long life.

Mauritius celebrates Chinese New Year with joy, family reunions, and ethnic pride, emphasising the island's diversity and harmonious blending of cultural influences.



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

A city for all seasons

WORDS: TED ROGERS

Jerusalem, a city cherished by Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike, combines history, spirituality, and culture. Each season in Jerusalem has its own distinct beauty, altering the city in numerous ways. While the best time to visit depends on your interests, this article will walk you through the seasons, providing insights into the city's year-round attraction.



Old Jerusalem, The Armenian Patriarchate street

Something about Jerusalem captures the imagination when you first see it on the horizon, as you travel southeast from Ben Gurion International Airport, on the outskirts of Tel Aviv, into the Judean Hills. It is a city of wonderfully spartan beauty, made entirely of several tonnes of natural stone – yellow, pink, and grey – and pocked with scrubby foliage and sudden, random bursts of bougainvillea, forsythia, and honeysuckle. For such an ancient city, Jerusalem seems enamoured with the new. Luxury apartment projects loom at unexpected junctions.

If you're wondering how Jerusalem got to be such a religious and spiritual centre, as well as a pilgrimage place for millions of travellers from all over the world, the explanation goes back thousands of years. Jerusalem's history is full of wars and strife. Its strategic location drew several nations to make the city, and some of them did so for varying periods of time. This city has experienced war and peace, love and hatred, wealth and poverty, devastation and renewal, joy and sorrow.



Jerusalem Botanical Gardens

Spring: A time for renewal and celebrations

Springtime in Jerusalem, from March to May, is undoubtedly the best season to visit. The weather is moderate, with temperatures ranging from 12°C to 24°C (54°F to 75°F), which is ideal for touring the city's ancient streets and historical sites.

During this season, the city is alive with the brilliant hues of flowering flowers. The Jerusalem Botanical Gardens and the Haas Promenade are exceptionally lovely, with breathtaking views and a diverse range of vegetation.



The Jerusalem Film Festival

Spring is also a period for big religious festivities. Passover, a major Jewish holiday, is celebrated in April, and the city brims with pleasure and spirit. Pilgrims from all around the world converge to remember the Exodus, with special rituals held at the Western Wall.

Passover is an elaborate event in Israel today (and in Jewish communities all over the world). As in the past, Jerusalem performs a thorough 'spring cleaning' in preparation for the celebration. It is also a time for vacation for Israelis, and many who can afford it enjoy celebrating the holiday at resorts where someone else cooks and cleans.

Every year, Bank Hapoalim sponsors tens of Israeli museums that open for free during the Passover holiday. These represent some of Israel's largest and best museums.

Of course, since the Temple was destroyed, lambs are no longer slaughtered on the Temple Mount. However, different Jewish sects use the Passover holiday to emphasise the connection between modern-day Israel and the Israel of the Scriptures.

For Christians, Easter attracts thousands of pilgrims to Jerusalem. The Stations of the Cross procession on Good Friday down the Via Dolorosa is a very touching experience that retraces Jesus' steps to his crucifixion.

It is one of the most exciting and meaningful occasions for Christians to visit since it provides a one-of-a-kind opportunity to spend the holiday in the very location where the original tale took place. Orthodox and Catholic Christians celebrate at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City, where they have commemorated Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection since the fourth century.

The focal point of these celebrations is, of course, the old city of Jerusalem. Easter, like Christmas, is one of Israel's two most popular times of the year for Christian visitors. Explore the Holy Land and be inspired by the unique, eye-opening experiences.

Summer: Vibrancy and celebrations in the heat

Summer in Jerusalem is hot and dry from June to August, with temperatures frequently topping 30°C (86°F). Despite the heat, the city's bustling cultural life and several festivals make it a great time to visit.

The Jerusalem Film Festival in July features a diverse selection of international and local films, attracting cinephiles from all over the world. Another highlight is the Jerusalem Light Festival, which illuminates the Old City with stunning light installations and performances.

The Jerusalem Film Festival is an annual international film festival that takes place in Jerusalem. It was started in 1984 by Lia Van Leer, Director of the Jerusalem Cinematheque and Israeli cinema Archive, and has since become the most important Israeli event for filmmakers and cinema enthusiasts.

Every summer, the Festival shows around 200 films from 60 countries over ten days, in addition to a variety of special events, panels, and meetings with well-known local and international filmmakers, as well as professional industry training and activities.

While the heat might be intense, the evenings are cool and perfect for enjoying the city's nightlife. The popular Mahane Yehuda Market comes alive with clubs, restaurants, and live entertainment.

The Mahane Yehuda Market, or shuk, is Jerusalem's largest market, with over 250 sellers offering everything from fruits and vegetables to specialised cuisines, apparel and Judaica. The market is Jerusalem's biggest historic marketplace, and it is a must-see experience for anybody visiting the city, full with unique noises, sights, and scents.

Autumn: A season of reflection and tranquility

Autumn, which lasts from September to November, with mild temperatures ranging from 15°C to 25°C (59°F to 77°F) and a more relaxed mood. The city is less busy than in the spring, making it suitable for individuals who want a more relaxed atmosphere.

The Jewish High Holy days of Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) take place in September or October. These festivals are defined by solemnity and introspection, and provide a unique opportunity to witness deeply ingrained customs.

The Sukkot feast, held in October, is another highlight. Sukkahs, or temporary booths, are placed throughout the city to represent the cottages the Israelites lived in while wandering in the wilderness. The celebratory environment includes community meals, music, and dancing.

Sukkot is a week-long Jewish holiday that commemorates the autumn harvest. It is one of Judaism's most cheerful celebrations, designed to bring families, friends, and communities together. The feast also honours the 40 years the Jews spent in the desert after escaping slavery in Egypt.



Symbols for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year



Hanukkah, also known as Chanukah, is Judaism's 'festival of lights'

Winter: A time for spiritual reflection

Winter in Jerusalem is chilly and wet from December to February, with temperatures ranging from 6°C to 14°C (43°F to 57°F). While the weather can be unpredictable, winter provides a more peaceful, introspective view of the city.

For Christians, December is a special month, with Christmas celebrations concentrated on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and neighbouring Bethlehem. The Midnight Mass at the Church of the Nativity is an unforgettable event for believers.

Hanukkah, or the Jewish Festival of Lights, is also celebrated in December. The city is adorned with menorahs, and each night, candles are lit to accompany singing, games, and the consumption of traditional dishes such as *latkes* and *sufganiyot*.

Hanukkah, also known as Chanukah, is Judaism's 'festival of lights.' On eight successive nights, Jews gather with family and friends to light an additional candle in the menorah, a multibranch candelabra. Hanukkah means 'dedication' in Hebrew, and the holiday commemorates the rededication of Jerusalem's Temple in the second century BC, when a small group of Jewish rebels reclaimed it from foreign occupiers.

Jerusalem's unique tapestry of history, religion, and culture makes it a year-round destination. Whether you visit in the exuberant spring, the joyful summer, the reflective autumn, or the calm winter, Jerusalem offers a genuinely satisfying experience. The optimal time to visit is determined by your unique interests and expectations from this magnificent city.



Air Seychelles operates flights between Seychelles and Tel Aviv, 2 times a week. Visit: www.airseychelles.com for more information

A paradise for outdoor aficionados

WORDS: MAMBO GICHUKI

La Réunion, with its spectacular terrain, rich forests, and vibrant culture, is an ideal destination for both adventurers and leisure tourists. This volcanic island in the Indian Ocean has a variety of activities for thrill-seekers of all skill levels as well as those who simply want to enjoy the island's natural beauty. Whether you're trekking up volcanic peaks, canyoning down waterfalls, or simply enjoying the island's beaches and gastronomic pleasures, La Réunion has a variety of experiences that makes it a really unique location in the Indian Ocean.



Bird's eye view of La Réunion

Trails through paradise

La Réunion is known for its large network of hiking routes, making it a popular destination for hikers. The island's diverse geography, which ranges from towering volcanic peaks to deep, verdant cirques, provides trails for all levels of skill.

Piton des Neiges: For the most daring, the climb to the summit of Piton des Neiges, the highest point in the Indian Ocean at 3,070 metres (10,070 feet), is a must. This strenuous walk usually takes two days, including an overnight stay in a mountain refuge. The reward is a stunning sunrise over the island, complete with panoramic views of the surrounding countryside.

Three tracks lead to the peak, one from the Cirque de Salazie, another from the Cirque de Cilaos, and a third from Plaine des Cafres. They gather at a manned mountain hut about an hour's hike from the summit. The trip begins at Cilaos and takes an average of 8.5 hours to complete. Most hikers prefer to spend overnight in the mountain hut, Gîte de la Caverne Dufour. This hike is considered difficult due to the elevation climb, while the hike beginning at la Plaine des Cafres is substantially longer with a similar elevation gain.

The Cirque de Mafate: It is only accessible by foot or helicopter, providing a unique hiking experience. The steep topography and isolated

communities within this caldera give the impression of stepping back in time. The trails here range from moderate to tough, going through lush forests, rivers, and sheer cliffs.

Mafate is notable for the absence of roadways. As a result, it is a popular destination for hikers looking to immerse themselves in nature while still having access to grocery stores and other amenities. As a result, with the planned establishment of a national park on the heights of Réunion, it appears unlikely that roads will ever be built. All access, including supplies, is via foot or helicopter. There are a number of footpaths for reaching the cirque.

Cirque de Salazie and Cirque de Cilaos: These cirques provide significantly easier hikes with equally stunning vistas. The Cirque de Salazie is famed for its waterfalls, notably the famous Voile de la Mariée, whereas Cilaos is distinguished for its terraced vineyards and the magnificent backdrop of Piton des Neiges.

Visit Piton de la Fournaise, one of the world's most active volcanoes, for a unique volcanic landscape experience. The climb to the rim of its crater provides an otherworldly experience, with views of the caldera and, if you're lucky, streaming lava during an eruption. A forestry road and track connect the highway of the lowlands near Bourg-Murat to the Pas de Bellecombe (Bellecombe Pass), which includes a parking area and snack bar.



Hiker at the summit of Piton des Neiges

Ⓣ An adrenaline-packed adventure

La Réunion is a popular canyoning destination due to its numerous waterfalls, steep ravines, and crystal-clear rivers. This activity entails descending canyons utilising abseiling, jumping, sliding down natural water slides, and swimming.

- Trou de Fer is one of the world's most stunning canyoning destinations, with a steep, narrow ravine with several waterfalls that drop over 300 metres. This excursion is for experienced canyoning and provides an exciting tour through one of the island's most secluded and scenic places.

- Bras Rouge, located in the Cirque de Cilaos, is a popular canyoning destination for beginners and intermediate travellers. The route leads you through a series of waterfalls and natural ponds, with magnificent views of the surrounding mountains.



The thermal currents surrounding Saint-Leu make it an ideal location for paragliding



Bras Rouge route leads you through a series of waterfalls and natural ponds

Ⓣ Gliding above the Island

La Réunion is one of the world's best paragliding locations, because of its diverse scenery and favourable weather conditions. The island has many take-off points, the most well-known being Saint-Leu. The thermal currents surrounding Saint-Leu make it an ideal location for paragliding and from here, you may glide along the coast, taking in spectacular views of the ocean, coral reefs, and the island's lush, green interior. Tandem flights are available for novices, as well as solo flights for experienced pilots.

🕒 Ride the waves and explore the depths

The waters near La Réunion provide a variety of sports for individuals who enjoy the ocean, including surfing and diving.

La Réunion is a famous surfing destination due to its tremendous waves. Saint-Leu on the west coast is a world-renowned surf break known for its lengthy, barrelling waves. However, surfing on the island is dangerous due to the likelihood of shark encounters, and specific locations are monitored or forbidden.

The island's coral reefs, especially along the west coast, offer excellent opportunities for scuba diving and snorkelling. L'Hermitage and Saint-Gilles-les-Bains have quiet lagoons with vivid coral gardens filled with marine life like tropical fish, turtles, and rays. More daring divers can explore the deep waters off the island's coast, where they may encounter larger animals like dolphins and sharks.

Stand-Up Paddleboarding (SUP) offers a relaxing way to explore the island's coastal lagoons. Paddleboarding on the tranquil waters of the lagoon is a relaxing way to enjoy the island's coastline, with opportunities to see marine life below.



La Réunion is a famous surfing destination due to its tremendous waves



The drive into the Cirque de Salazie is one of the most spectacular on the island

🕒 Road trips and scenic drives

For those who prefer a slower pace, La Réunion has magnificent routes that display its different scenery.

La Route du Volcan: This road leads from the Plaine des Cafres to the volcanic landscapes of Piton de la Fournaise. You'll go through lush woods, high-altitude plains, and, finally, the bleak, lunar-like scenery of the volcano.

La Route des Laves: This path follows the southeast coast of the island and highlights the stunning effects of previous volcanic eruptions, where lava flows have reached the sea. The contrast between the black lava fields and the blue ocean is stunning.

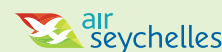
Cirque de Salazie: The drive into the Cirque de Salazie is one of the most spectacular on the island, travelling through rich flora, past towering waterfalls, and providing vistas of the craggy peaks that surround the cirque.

After a day of action, La Réunion's towns and villages provide numerous possibilities to relax and absorb up the local culture.

Saint Denis, the island's capital, combines French and Creole elements, with historical architecture, busy marketplaces, and a thriving food scene. Explore the Jardin de l'État, visit the Musée Léon Dierx for modern art, or eat at a local Creole restaurant.

Cilaos, renowned for its thermal springs and vineyards, is an ideal place to unwind. Try the local wine, which is unique due to the high-altitude vineyards, or relax in the thermal spas.

Don't miss the opportunity to try Réunionese cuisine, a blend of Creole, Indian, Chinese, and French flavours. Must-try dishes include *cari*, *rougail saucisse*, and *bouchons*, which are often served with a side of spicy piment and a glass of rum arrangé. La Réunion is a paradise for those seeking adventure and leisure.



Air Seychelles operates flights from Seychelles to Mauritius 3 times a week with connections to La Réunion and Madagascar with partner airlines. Air Seychelles seasonal direct flights to La Réunion ends 18 Jan 2025. Visit: www.airseychelles.com for more information

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A delightful cluster

WORDS: SILHOUETTE



Most holidaymakers consider sun-kissed days, moonlit nights, sandy beaches, and warm crystal-clear water to be the essential ingredients for the ideal vacation. This is especially visible in the Maldives, a lovely collection of equatorial coral islands in the deep Indian Ocean that is quickly becoming a popular international tourist destination.

These islands are located in the world's cleanest ocean, and in enchanted moments that you will remember for the rest of your life, you learn the graceful art of doing nothing – and doing it well – simply sunbathing, daydreaming, swimming, or strolling through the whispering palms beneath the pin-bright stars of the southern constellations on an indigo tropic night.

For the more active, a whole range of water sports is available: snorkelling, windsurfing, sailing, canoeing, scuba diving, waterskiing, parasailing and fishing.

Here are some islands that highlight the Maldives' diverse beauty and unique experiences, ranging from luxury and romance to adventure and indigenous culture.





Malé-Velana International Airport

The isle of dreamy light

Malé Island, the Maldives' capital, is a thriving hub of activity and culture. The greatest way to discover Malé is on foot. It has busy markets, historical attractions such as the Hukuru Miskiy (Friday Mosque), and the National Museum, which has a collection of royal possessions. Its most fascinating exhibitions, however, are archaeological discoveries. The interesting relics gathered from temples scattered around the atolls are spread out against an exterior wall and a tiny room. Objects in the Museum belonged to former sultans, including thrones, sedan chairs, ceremonial parasols, palanquins, and intricately decorated lacquer boxes.

Despite its urban setting, it provides stunning waterfront views and convenient access to adjacent destinations. There are no clubs or bars in Malé. There are European and Maldivian eateries and almost every alleyway has a tea store that serves piping hot tea and food.

Malé is so small that it cannot accommodate an airport. Airliners land on nearby Hulhule Island, which for years served as a vacation destination for sultans living in Malé. This long, thin stretch of land, conveniently located near the city, functions as a natural aircraft carrier permanently anchored in the sea, with the world's only runway that begins and ends in water.



Marine exploration

Marine exploration

Baa Atoll, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, is known for its magnificent marine variety. This is for eco-conscious visitors and nature lovers interested in discovering and protecting the environment. Baa Atoll, known for its diverse marine life, provides some of the best diving and snorkelling opportunities in the Maldives, as well as a variety of water activities. Traditional and large game fishing expeditions are popular, offering the opportunity to learn Maldivian fishing techniques and enjoy fresh catches. Hanifaru Bay is particularly noted for Manta rays and whale shark sightings. The atoll's beautiful coral reefs are home to a diverse range

of marine animals, making it ideal for underwater photography and exploration.

There are various luxury resorts that offer overwater villas, private beaches, and top-tier amenities. Guests can enjoy private excursions, gourmet meals, luxury spas, and tailored services, resulting in a magnificent and unforgettable stay. Guests can take part in educational programmes and guided tours that emphasise the value of marine conservation and sustainable tourism.

Baa Atoll's natural beauty, excellent lodgings, and commitment to sustainability make it a top choice for tourists looking for a unique and enriching Maldivian experience.

Cultural exchange

Maafushi is very close to Malé, the main city, and can be reached by speedboat or ferry, making it an ideal destination for travellers. Unlike many Maldivian islands, which are dominated by luxury resorts, Maafushi has a variety of affordable lodgings, such as guesthouses and modest hotels. This makes it more accessible to a diverse spectrum of tourists. There are a variety of economic activities and excursions available, making it an appealing alternative for budget-conscious tourists.

You may immerse yourself in true Maldivian culture, including traditional cuisine, music, and rituals. The locals are kind and provide a true glimpse into Maldivian life and an opportunity to interact with the local community, which promotes cultural interchange and understanding.

The island's beaches include clean, turquoise seas that are perfect for swimming and snorkelling. It is surrounded by abundant marine life, and numerous dive shops provide guided tours to adjacent reefs. Water sports such as kayaking, jet skiing, windsurfing, and paddle boarding are widely available.

There are various restaurants and cafes that provide both Maldivian and international food. Seafood is a highlight, with fresh catches prepared in a variety of ways. Traditional music and dance events, such as Bodu Beru, are frequently held for cultural enjoyment.



Numerous dive shops along the beach front



The heartbeat of Maldivian culture



Hulhumalé Island, a blend of urban development and natural beauty



Hulhumalé Island beach front

Urban and natural beauty

Hulhumalé Island is a unique blend of urban development and natural beauty, with a variety of tourist attractions and experiences. It is conveniently located near Malé, the capital city, and may be reached by ferry or speedboat. This proximity makes it an ideal destination for visitors arriving at Velana International Airport.

It is a planned island with contemporary infrastructure, comprising residential sections, commercial establishments, and public spaces. It has lengthy expanses of clean beaches with clear, turquoise waters, making it an ideal place to unwind and sunbathe. The island's beaches are ideal for swimming, snorkelling, and other water sports.

The island has a wide selection of accommodations, from low-cost guesthouses to mid-range hotels, appealing to a diversity of tourists. There are several dining alternatives, and coastal cafés and restaurants provide stunning views while dining. Although nightlife is more subdued in comparison to other places, there are a few clubs and lounges where travellers may unwind and enjoy a drink.

There are various parks and natural places that offer opportunities for leisure and recreation. Central Park is popular among both locals and tourists. While Hulhumalé is modern, it still provides glimpses into Maldivian culture through local markets, festivals, and cultural activities.

A romantic getaway

Veligandu Island is a well-known luxury resort in the Maldives, known for its tranquil atmosphere and private experiences. The island is accessible via a picturesque seaplane trip from Malé, which offers guests stunning aerial views of the Maldivian atolls.

The island is home to a luxurious resort with overwater villas, beachfront bungalows, and world-class amenities. It has beautiful white sandy beaches and crystal-clear turquoise waters, ideal for relaxation and beach activities and the island is surrounded by rich tropical flora, which creates a gorgeous and calm setting.

It is popular among honeymooners and couples, with romantic surroundings such as isolated beachfront, overwater villas with private pools, and intimate dining options. The resort has several eating options, including buffet-style and à la carte restaurants that provide a mix of international and local cuisine.

The island has great snorkelling and diving opportunities, with bright coral reefs and rich marine life close off its shores where guests can also engage in other water sports.

The Island is recognised for its tranquil and quiet atmosphere, making it a great destination for people looking to unwind and escape from the rush and bustle of daily life.

Local charm

Thulusdhoo Island is a dynamic and popular Maldivian resort, notably noted for its exceptional surf locations and local charm. It is conveniently located near Malé, making it easily accessible by speedboat which, typically takes 30 minutes to an hour. It draws surfers from all over the world and the greatest months for surfing are often March through October, when the waves are at their highest.

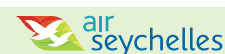
Unlike many resort islands, it provides a look into true Maldivian life, including a welcoming local community and cultural events. It offers beautiful white sandy beaches and the surrounding waters are teeming with marine life, making it an ideal location for snorkelling and diving, where you can explore vivid coral reefs and meet a variety of aquatic creatures. The island has a variety of accommodations to suit different types of tourists, ranging from low-cost guesthouses to expensive boutique hotels.

Several restaurants and cafes serve a mix of Maldivian and international food. Fresh fish is a feature. The island provides possibilities to purchase local handicrafts and souvenirs, which benefits the local economy. It is a popular destination for both adventurers and those wishing to explore the Maldives outside of the normal resort setting.

The Maldives' climate is generally warm and humid, with two monsoons. The greatest time to visit is during the northwest monsoon, which lasts from December to March and brings bright skies and almost constant sunshine. Showers are abundant during the southwest monsoon season, which lasts from April to October.



Tranquil and quiet beach front



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



The joyous festival

WORDS: ZARA KHAN







Holi, which will be celebrated on 14 March 2025, symbolises the onset of spring and the triumph of good over evil. It is celebrated with great passion and delight in Mumbai and throughout India.

Holi is a revered ancient Hindu ritual that is celebrated in several Indian and Nepalese states, as well as regional festivities in other nations. It is a traditional event in which Hindus and non-Hindus alike can engage in playful banter with one another by throwing coloured water and powder at each other. It is also often noticed across the Indian subcontinent. Holi is celebrated at the end of winter, on the last full moon day of the Hindu luni solar calendar month, which marks the start of spring, hence the date varies according to the lunar cycle. The Gregorian calendar normally places the date in March, but it can also fall in late February.

The celebration has several functions, the most important of which is to mark the start of Spring. In 17th-century literature, it was described as a festival that praised agriculture, good spring crops, and fertile soil. Hindus think it is the time to celebrate spring's vibrant colours and bid farewell to winter. To many Hindus, Holi ceremonies symbolise a chance to reset and restore broken relationships, settle conflicts, and purge themselves of accumulated emotional impurities from the past.

Holi traditions differ across the country and have their origins in Indian mythology. The event is widely associated with the mythology of Hiranyakashipu, an ancient Indian demon ruler. Hiranyakashipu enlisted the help of his sister, Holika, to assassinate his son, Prahlada, a devout Vishnu worshipper. In order to burn Prahlada, Holika sat with him on a pyre while wearing a cloak that protected her from the fire. But the garment shielded Prahlada, while Holika burnt. Later that night, Vishnu killed Hiranyakashipu, and the event was proclaimed as a triumph of good over evil. In many parts of India, a big pyre is lit the night before Holi to commemorate the celebration.

In other locations, the tale of Krishna and Radha is central. According to legend, Krishna, a Hindu divinity and manifestation of Vishnu, fell in love with the milkmaid Radha but was humiliated since his complexion was dark blue and hers was fair. To make amends, he playfully coloured her face during a game with her and the other milkmaids. This is believed to be the origin of coloured water and powder flinging. The general merrymaking is also associated with Krishna, who is famed for his pranks and amusement.

Kama Dahanam, like *Holika Dahan*, is celebrated in certain parts of India. It also has a religious purpose, as represented by the mythology of *Holika*. The night before Holi, bonfires are lighted as part of a tradition known as *Holika Dahan* (burning of *Holika*) or Little Holi. People congregate around flames to sing and dance.

The following morning is celebrated as Rangwali Holi (*Dhuleti*), in which people smear and bathe each other with colours. Water pistols and water-filled balloons are frequently used to play and colour each other, with anyone and anywhere considered fair game for colouring. Drums and other musical instruments are frequently carried by groups as they sing and dance from one location to another. Throughout the day, people visit relatives, and friends and adversaries gather to speak, consume food and drinks, and eat Holi specialities. Holi is also a celebration of forgiveness and new beginnings, which ritually seeks to create harmony in society.



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

Groups sing and dance, with some playing drums and *dholaks*. After each stop for fun and colour play, individuals give marijuana-infused snacks and drinks as part of the holy festival.

Rang Panchami, five days after Holi, is frequently celebrated, especially in sections of Mumbai where there are several Holi parties, which take place on beaches, in clubs, and in public spaces where people come to dance to music, apply colours, and watch performances.

Rang Panchami, which marks the end of the Holi festivities, is seen to be a period of spiritual purification. It is deeply ingrained in local traditions and is celebrated with tremendous enthusiasm in some areas. Traditional music and dance are essential components of the festivities. Food and sweets are exchanged between community members, promoting a sense of togetherness.

Rang Panchami is widely celebrated in Maharashtra, particularly in the cities of Mumbai and Pune. People frequently assemble in public locations to play with colours and water. Children and teens spray coloured powder solutions (*gulal*) at each other, laugh, and rejoice, while adults apply dry coloured powder (*abir*) to each other's faces. Visitors to homes are first teased with colours before being presented with Holi foods (such as *gujia*, *shakkarpaare*, *matri*, and *dahi-bada*), desserts, and beverages. After playing with colours and cleaning up, individuals bathe, change into clean clothes, and visit friends and relatives.

In residential neighbourhoods, neighbours gather to celebrate with music, dancing, and a community meal. Children and adults alike participate in fun water fights using water balloons and water pistols filled with coloured water.

Various concerts and DJ activities are held throughout the city. These gatherings frequently feature popular artists, resulting in a carnival-like atmosphere.

Traditional meals like *gujiya* (sweet dumplings), *puran poli* (sweet flatbread), *thandai* (a spiced milk drink), and numerous snacks are cooked and shared by friends and family.

Some localities also offer cultural events with traditional dances, music, and performances that celebrate India's rich heritage.

On this one day – the full moon day of the Hindu month of Phalguna – societal rankings such as caste, gender, age, and status are abandoned in favour of making joyful together, and everyone is fair game for being sprayed with paint.

Holi in Mumbai is a unique blend of traditional and modern celebrations, making it an unforgettable event for both residents and visitors.



Tips for Celebrating Holi in Mumbai

Wear old clothes: The hues can permanently stain clothes, so choose something you don't mind getting damaged.

Skin and haircare: Apply oil or moisturiser to your skin and hair to make it easier to remove the colours afterwards.

Stay hydrated: The festivities can be tiring, so drink plenty of water.

Be respectful: Make sure that everyone around you is at ease and willing to join in the celebrations.



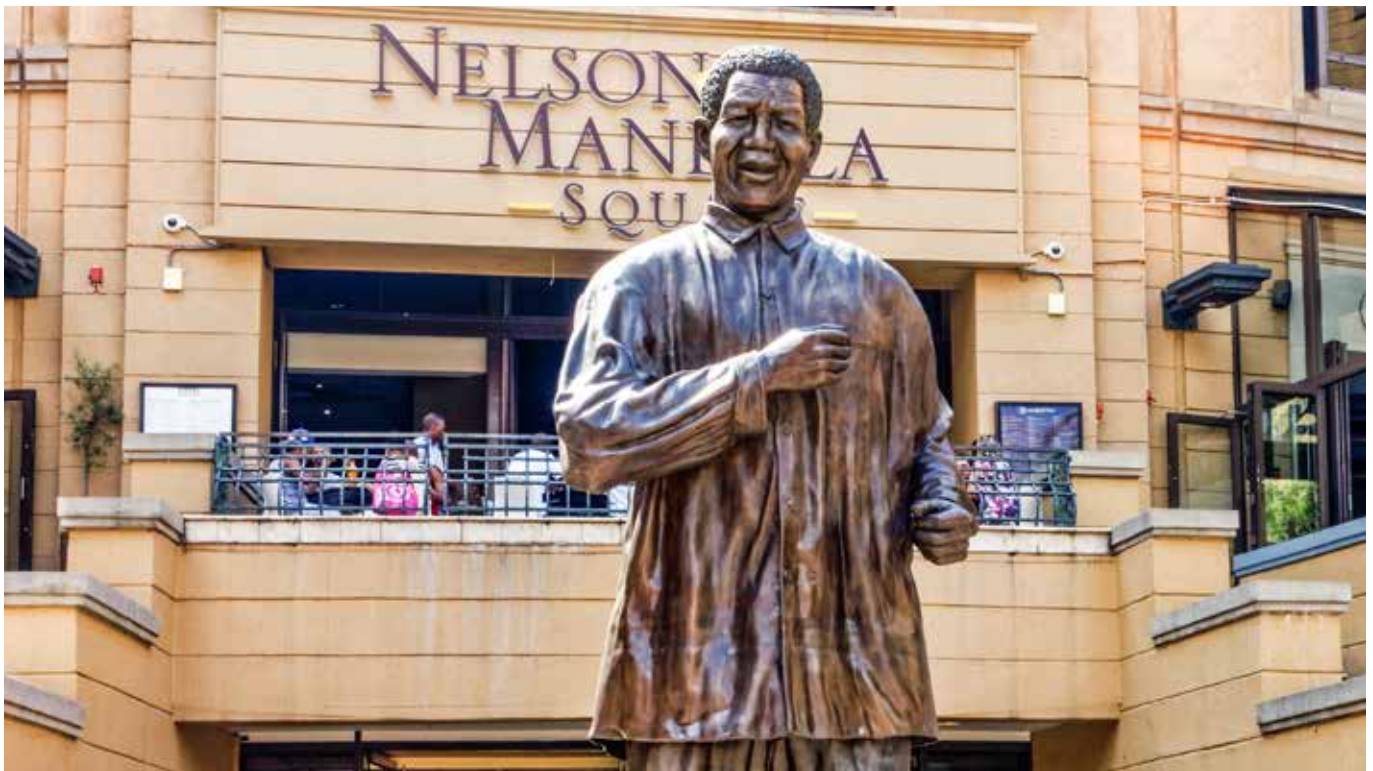
Choose a direct route from Seychelles to Mumbai or take advantage of partner airline flights via Colombo to other cities in India. Visit: www.airseychelles.com for more information

Alpha global city

WORDS: MAMBO GICHUKI

In little than a century and a half, Johannesburg has grown to become southern Africa's largest city. It is also one of the world's top 100 largest metropolitan areas and gateway to South Africa's economic powerhouse. In fact, the Globalisation and World Cities Research Network has classed it as an 'alpha global city,' suggesting that it is an important node in the global economy. It is known for its rich history, lively culture, and economic strength.

Johannesburg saw extreme racial segregation and discrimination during apartheid, which had far-reaching consequences for the city's social and economic landscape. During apartheid, non-white citizens were forcibly evacuated from major districts to townships such as Soweto. Despite these obstacles, Johannesburg became a hub for anti-apartheid action and resistance. The end of apartheid in 1994 set off a transition, with initiatives to rectify previous inequities and unite the city. Johannesburg is dealing with the aftermath of apartheid while aiming for greater social and economic inclusiveness. It is the home of the Apartheid Museum which traces the country's footsteps from the dark days to a place of healing. The museum also hosts exhibitions dedicated to Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu, as well as a range of temporary exhibitions. Here are some fascinating facts that highlight Johannesburg's significance as a dynamic and multifaceted city with a rich history and a promising future:



Nelson Mandela Square



Orlando Power Station is a decommissioned coal-fired power station

Economic home

Johannesburg makes a considerable contribution to South Africa's GDP and is home to Africa's largest stock exchange, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE). Its diverse economy, strategic position, and sophisticated infrastructure encourage investment and innovation.

Johannesburg is home to the headquarters of many worldwide organisations as well as prominent South African firms in finance, mining, telecommunications, and retail. The city is the hub of South Africa's financial industry, including prominent institutions such as Standard Bank, First National Bank, and Nedbank. Johannesburg's mining history continues to have an impact on its economy, with gold and platinum mining making important contributions.

Its strategic position and facilities, which includes OR Tambo International Airport, makes it an important transportation and logistics hub. The city is a significant retail and wholesale trade hub, propelled by a varied consumer base and a growing middle class. Johannesburg has a thriving real estate business, with major investments in both commercial and residential properties. The city is a burgeoning IT and innovation cluster, with numerous IT enterprises and start-ups, particularly in finance and digital services. While Johannesburg has not traditionally been a tourist destination, it does attract business travellers and tourists.



Johannesburg's skyline

The city of gold

Johannesburg's history may be traced back to the 1886 gold rush, which fuelled fast expansion and growth. Originally a mining town, the city's growth was fuelled by an influx of prospectors and a thriving mining sector. The discovery of gold transformed Johannesburg into a thriving economic metropolis, setting the groundwork for its prominence as South Africa's economic superpower. The mining industry, particularly gold and platinum mining, continues to play an important role in the city's economy, albeit diversifying over time.

Tapestry of cultures

Johannesburg's history may be traced back to the 1886 gold rush, which fuelled fast expansion and growth. Originally a mining town, the city's growth was fuelled by an influx of prospectors and a thriving mining sector. The discovery of gold transformed Johannesburg into a thriving economic metropolis, setting the groundwork for its prominence as South Africa's economic superpower. The mining industry, particularly gold and platinum mining, continues to play an important role in the city's economy, albeit diversifying over time.



Johannesburg Art Gallery

Artistic diversity

Johannesburg has a rich arts and cultural scene. The city is home to various galleries, theatres, and museums, including the Johannesburg Art Gallery, the Apartheid Museum, the Market Theatre, and the Constitution Hill complex. It is a thriving hub of art and culture, presenting a wide range of creative expression. It has a flourishing contemporary art culture, and events such as the Johannesburg Art Fair draw international attention.

Johannesburg's cultural environment is boosted by music, dance, and theatre, with iconic venues such as the Market Theatre playing important roles. The city's street art, notably in Maboneng and Braamfontein, contributes to its vibrant and youthful atmosphere.

Festivals and cultural events, such as the Joy of Jazz Festival and the Dance Umbrella, highlight Johannesburg's artistic diversity. Johannesburg's multinational population adds to a diverse tapestry of cultures, languages, and cuisines, making it a vibrant and eclectic cultural attraction.

Southwestern townships

The township of Soweto is an essential component of Johannesburg. It was a centre of resistance during apartheid and is today a thriving community with a rich cultural history. It stands for southwestern townships, a historically prominent district in Johannesburg. It was built in the early twentieth century with the intention of housing black labourers employed in the city and mines during the apartheid system. Soweto became a centre of anti-apartheid resistance and activism, most notably during the 1976 Soweto Uprising, in which students resisted the imposition of Afrikaans in schools, resulting in a harsh police response. Today, Soweto is a dynamic town noted for its rich cultural heritage, historic sites such as Nelson Mandela's former home and its role in South Africa's democratic transition. It remains a symbol of the fight for liberty and equality. There have been signs recently indicating economic improvement. The Johannesburg City Council began to provide more street lights and to pave roads. Soweto has also become a centre for nightlife and culture.

Rosebank Mall and The Zone are easily accessible via the quick rail service. Bus and taxi services also serve the region. Together they form a bustling and dynamic shopping and entertainment destination in Johannesburg. They cater to a diversified audience with a variety of retail stores, food options, and entertainment facilities, making them a must-see for anybody visiting the city. Whether you're seeking for the latest fashion, a gourmet dinner, or a fun day out, Rosebank Mall and The Zone have something for you.

Green city

Despite its urban setting, Joburg boasts one of the world's largest man-made urban woods. The city boasts about 10 million trees, the Johannesburg Botanical Garden, Emmarentia Dam, and Zoo Lake are all prominent green spaces that provide inhabitants and visitors with plenty of leisure possibilities. There are various parks and nature reserves that enhance the scenery and provide green spaces and contribute to its distinct scenery.

To preserve and enhance these green spaces, initiatives for environmental sustainability and urban greening have been implemented. Johannesburg's dedication to conserving its natural environment adds to its distinct character, merging urban development with lush vegetation and encouraging a healthier, more sustainable urban living.



Tree planting

Cradle of Humankind

The Cradle of Humankind, near Johannesburg, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its significant paleoanthropological discoveries, including the Sterkfontein Caves, where key fossils like 'Mrs. Ples' and 'Little Foot' were found. These findings shed light on human evolution, attracting researchers and tourists. The Maropeng Visitor Centre offers educational exhibits on early human history, highlighting Johannesburg's role in human origins.

Neighbourgoods Market in Johannesburg is a vibrant cultural hub where locals and visitors can enjoy food, music, and entertainment. Emphasising community and local business support, it showcases the city's creative and culinary culture, making it a popular spot for socialising and exploring Johannesburg's urban life.



Maropeng Visitor Centre for the Cradle of Humankind, a World Heritage Site

Tourism and hospitality

Johannesburg's tourism and hospitality sector are a vital part of its economy, attracting both business travellers and tourists interested in its cultural, historical, and recreational offerings. Key attractions include the Apartheid Museum, Constitution Hill, and the vibrant neighbourhoods of Maboneng and Soweto, which provide deep insights into South Africa's history and culture.

The city's hospitality industry is well-developed, with a wide range of accommodations, from luxury hotels to budget-friendly options, catering to diverse visitor needs. Johannesburg also boasts a lively culinary scene, with restaurants offering both local and international cuisine.

Business tourism is significant, supported by extensive conference and exhibition facilities, including the Sandton Convention Centre. Johannesburg's shopping centres, such as Sandton City and Rosebank Mall, and entertainment venues add to its appeal.

Food scene

Johannesburg's food scene is a rich and diverse culinary tapestry, reflecting the city's multicultural population. The city offers a wide range of dining experiences, from traditional South African cuisine to international flavours. Popular food markets, like the Neighbourgoods Market in Braamfontein and the Market on Main in Maboneng, offer a variety of street food, artisanal products, and local delicacies. Johannesburg is home to several upscale restaurants and award-winning chefs, providing sophisticated dining experiences that cater to gourmet tastes. The city has a thriving café culture, with numerous coffee shops and bakeries offering everything from artisanal coffee to freshly baked pastries.



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

News and information



Travel facts

Air Seychelles news

Route network and fleet

Air Seychelles global offices

Important Information

Airport

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

Information

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

Time

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

Electric supply

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

Language

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

Currency

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

Credit cards

Most credit cards and travellers' cheques are accepted.

Banking

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

Public holidays 2025

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

• Easter Monday	21 April
• Labour Day	1 May
• Constitution Day	18 June
• Corpus Christi	19 June
• National Day	29 June
• Assumption Day	15 Aug
• All Saints Day	1 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.

Visa requirement

Visa is not required for entry into the Republic of Seychelles regardless of the nationality of the passport holder. A copy of valid return ticket and

proof of confirmed accommodation is required. www.ics.gov.sc

Ground transport

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

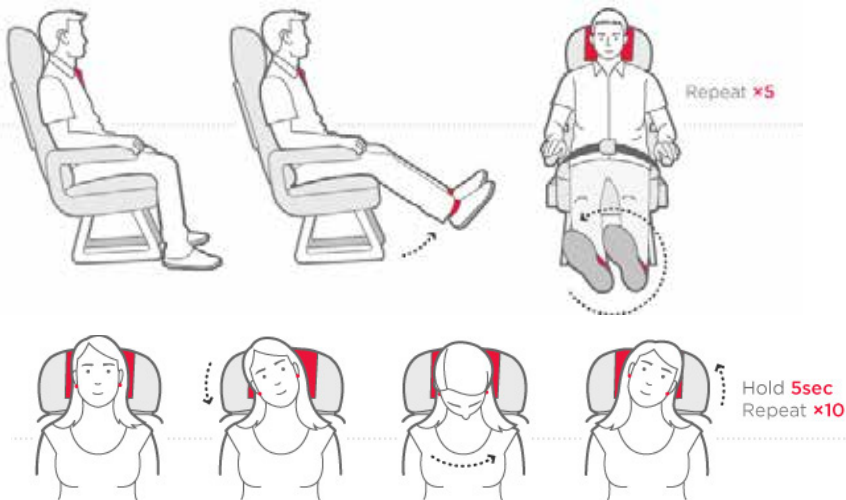
Taxi service

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

Tourist information office

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

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



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

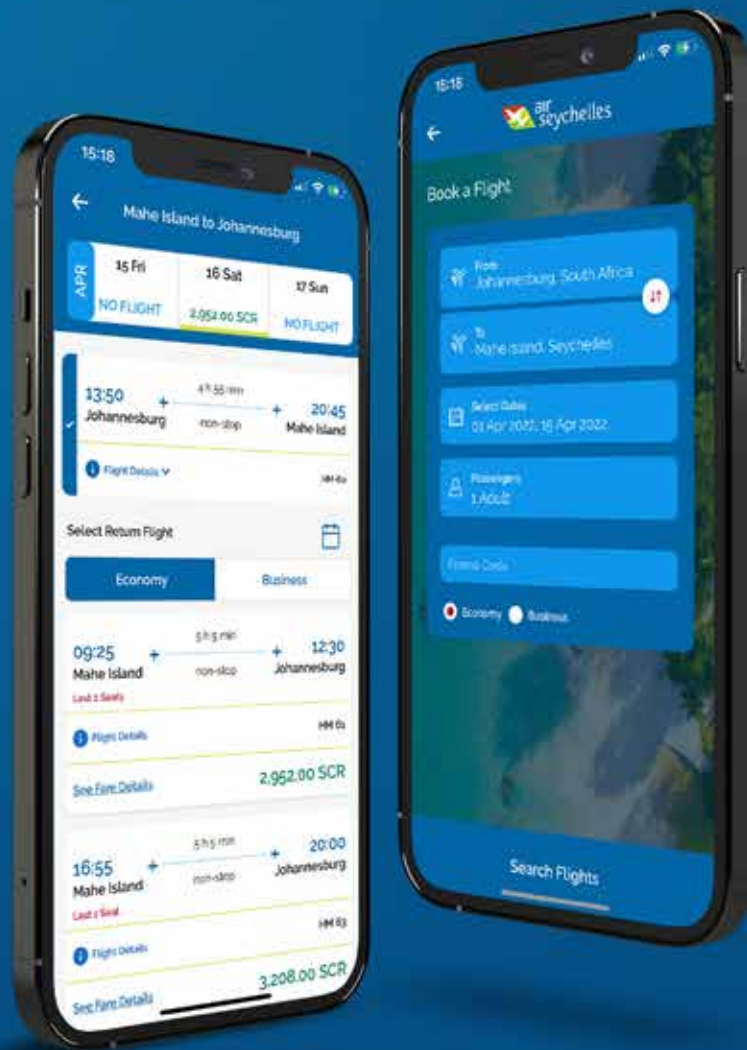
- Sit back in your seat and flatten the headrest.
- Gently and slowly roll your neck to one side, then back through the centre towards the other side.
- Try keeping the back of your neck extended.

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.



Get the most out of your trip

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- ✓ Manage your Booking
- ✓ Buy Extras
- ✓ Check-in Online





NEW SERVICE TO ABU DHABI

Air Seychelles is excited to announce the launch of its new, direct service from Seychelles International Airport (SEZ) to Abu Dhabi International Airport (AUH), commencing on 24 May 2025.

The flagship carrier of the Seychelles will operate six weekly flights, with daily services except on Thursdays out of Seychelles and Fridays out of Abu Dhabi, catering to the increasing demand from both leisure and business travellers.

“The capital city of Abu Dhabi has experienced tremendous population growth over the past decade, making it a vibrant year-round destination favoured by Seychellois families for its countless entertainment options. We are excited for the launch and are looking forward to offer our esteemed guests yet another destination to explore. The UAE (United Arab Emirates) also remains a crucial inbound tourist market for the destination, and we believe that the conditions are now optimal for the national airline to re-enter and establish a strong presence” shares Charles Johnson, Chief Commercial Officer of Air Seychelles.

Flight schedule for Abu Dhabi:

Flight no.	Origin	Departs	Destination	Arrives	Day
HM0018	Seychelles	2045	Abu Dhabi	0120	Daily except Thursdays
HM0019	Abu Dhabi	0745	Seychelles	1220	Daily except Fridays

In addition to the direct flights, the Abu Dhabi route will be code-shared with Etihad Airways. This partnership will provide passengers travelling from Seychelles with convenient nighttime departures, allowing seamless connections onto the Etihad Airways network for flights to Europe, the USA, and Asia.

AIR SEYCHELLES HOSTS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Pursuant to Section 88(4) of the Public Enterprise Act, 2023 and in accordance with the Companies Ordinance, 1972, Air Seychelles successfully convened its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Monday 14 October 2024 at the Docklands Auditorium in New Port, Victoria.

The meeting brought together key stakeholders, namely the shareholders of the company represented by the Secretary of State, Mr. Patrick Payet, representatives of the PEMC, the Air Seychelles Board of Directors as well as the airline’s management team.



During the AGM, the Air Seychelles’ management team presented a comprehensive review of the airline’s financial performance, highlighting significant achievements and

challenges faced throughout the year. Key topics included passenger growth, innovations in service delivery and future investments. As per the requirements of the law, the

Financial Statements for the year ended 2023 and the declaration of dividend was adopted and approved, as well as approving the external auditors for the year ending 2024.



AIR SEYCHELLES CELEBRATES LANDMARK PROFIT IN 2023

Air Seychelles has had a remarkable year in 2023, reporting a profit of USD 7 million. This achievement marks not only a successful continuation of its turnaround journey initiated in 2022 but also signals a strong revival. Air Seychelles transformed its net asset position from negative to positive in 2022, and its 2023 earnings reflect its commitment to sustainable growth and operational excellence.

Air Seychelles exceeded its budget expectations by USD 1.6 million and surpassed five-year plan targets by an impressive USD 4.7 million. It also marks a second consecutive profitable year for the airline. These figures showcase the airline's dedication to outperforming set objectives and delivering exceptional results to stakeholders.

Despite facing formidable challenges, such as the suspension of flights to Tel Aviv due to the conflict in Israel since 13 October 2023, which resulted in a revenue loss of USD 2.1 million for 2023, Air Seychelles managed to increase revenues by USD 2.8 million, partly due to the launch of the Colombo route. The airline has continued to lease out one A320neo on wet-lease (ACMI) operations during 2023, with the other A320neo operating the regional network. The resilience demonstrated by the airline amid these trying circumstances highlights its strategic initiatives and adaptability within the competitive aviation market.

To manage its financial health, Air Seychelles has diligently focused on debt reduction, successfully paying down USD 4.9 million of its bank loan with Nouvobanq to reduce its outstanding loan balance from an initial sum of USD 16.5 million to USD 11.6 million by

August 2024. Furthermore, Air Seychelles has completely paid off its lease deferral debt of USD 4.5 million, incurred during the COVID era. These efforts have led to a healthier balance sheet and a strengthened financial position. As part of its ongoing strategy to navigate the complexities of the aviation industry, Air Seychelles has made significant strides in addressing maintenance cost escalations, particularly concerning its A320neo engine fleet. In 2023, the airline took proactive measures by establishing a conservative annual accounting provision of USD 2.5 million dedicated specifically to cover potential return conditions for the aircraft and its engines. This foresight not only highlights Air Seychelles' commitment to financial transparency but also stabilises future profit expectations, ensuring robust financial health for the airline.

The remarkable achievements of Air Seychelles would not have been

possible without the unwavering dedication and talent of its staff. The Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer, Captain Sandy Benoiton expressed profound gratitude to all employees, acknowledging their crucial role in driving positive results.

"Your professionalism, creativity, and teamwork have driven our success and exceeded our expectations, demonstrating once again that our people are our greatest asset. As we move forward, Air Seychelles remains dedicated to excellence, growth, and resilience, securing a bright and prosperous future for our company and stakeholders." expressed Captain Sandy Benoiton, Chief Executive Officer of Air Seychelles.

As the airline looks forward to the future, it remains dedicated to delivering exemplary service, fostering innovation and achieving sustainable growth.

Our Network

International Network



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

MAP KEYS

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

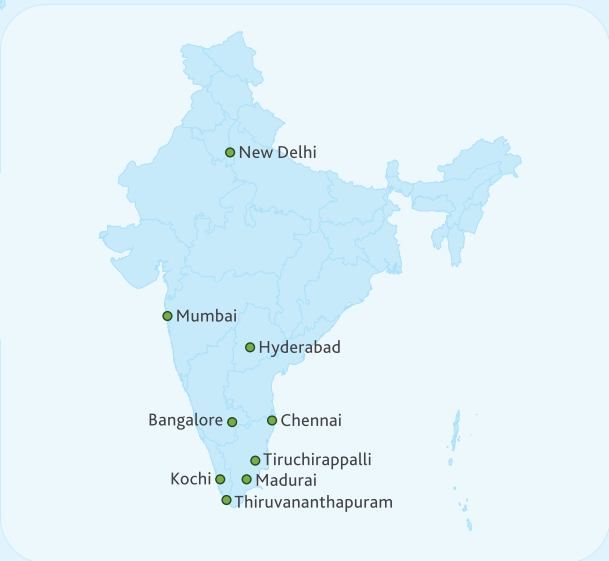
CODESHARE PARTNERS



INTERLINE PARTNERS



Sri Lankan Airlines Network (India)



Our Fleet

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

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



Airbus A320-200neo

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

Air Seychelles Domestic Network



Dhc-6 Twin Otter-400 Series

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

seyStream

in-flight entertainment










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 offices

<p>India</p> 	<p>Capital: New Delhi Languages: Hindi, English Currency: Indian Rupee Area: 3,287,590 km² Population: 1,263,830,000 Air Seychelles destination: Mumbai</p>	<p>Bird Group Ltd 204, 2nd Floor A Wing Kanakia Wall Street 400093 Mumbai Tel: +91 959 4013686 Email: hmsales@bird.travel hmres@bird.travel</p>
<p>Israel</p> 	<p>Capital: Jerusalem Language: Hebrew Currency: Israel Shekel Area: 20,770 km² Population: 9,085,610 Air Seychelles destination: Tel Aviv</p>	<p>AIRLINES GSA 3 Gilboa St Airport City 7019900 Tel Aviv Tel: +972 3 5160598 Email: hm@airlines-gsa.com</p>
<p>La Réunion</p> 	<p>Capital: Saint-Denis Languages: French Currency: Euro Land area: 2,512 km² Population: 859,959 Air Seychelles destination: Saint-Denis</p>	<p>Rogers Aviation (Mauritius) Ltd The Gardens Bagatelle Office Park Moka, Mauritius Tel: +230 2026671 Email: salim.mohungoo@rogers-aviation.com</p>
<p>Mauritius</p> 	<p>Capital: Port Louis Languages: French, English, Creole Currency: Rupees Area: 2,040 km² Population: 1,243,000 Air Seychelles destination: Port Louis</p>	<p>Rogers Aviation (Mauritius) Ltd The Gardens Bagatelle Office Park Moka, Mauritius Tel: +230 2026697 Email: salim.mohungoo@rogers-aviation.com</p>
<p>Seychelles</p> 	<p>Capital: Victoria Languages: Seychellois Creole, English Currency: Seychelles Rupee Area: 456 km² Population: 95,235 Air Seychelles destination: Mahé & Praslin</p>	<p>Air Seychelles Ltd Seychelles International Airport PO Box 386 Mahé Tel: +248 4391000 Email: callcentre@airseychelles.com</p>
<p>South Africa</p> 	<p>Capital: Pretoria Languages: English, Afrikaans (11 official languages) Currency: South African Rand Area: 1,221,037 km² Population: 45,919,000 Air Seychelles destination: Johannesburg</p>	<p>Rogers Aviation 3A Riley Rd, Building 11 Bedfordview Office Park, Bedfordview Johannesburg Tel: +27 11 326 4440 Email: airseychelles@rogers-aviation.co.za Reservations2@rogers-aviation.co.za benjaminc@rogers-aviation.co.za</p>
<p>Sri Lanka</p> 	<p>Capital: Colombo Languages: Sinhala, Tamil Currency: Sri Lankan Rupee Area: 65,610 km² Population: 22.16 million Air Seychelles destination: Colombo</p>	<p>Air Park (Pvt) Ltd 377A/1 Galle Road, Colombo 03 Sri Lanka Tel: +94 (0) 11 237 2870 Email: airseychelles@airpark.aero</p>



Reflection, Hope, and New Opportunities
Some thoughts to carry into 2025

Welcome change

Every year presents fresh difficulties and surprises. Accept them as chances for progress, rather than setbacks. Flexibility will be your biggest advantage.

Continuous learning

Embrace curiosity and explore fresh abilities, learn about foreign cultures, or just read more as growth is continuous and enriching.

Foster connections

Strengthen relationships with loved ones, close companions, and community. Acts of kindness, irrespective of small, can cause positive ripple effects.

Define thoughtful targets

Set clear, achievable goals for personal growth and development, job progress, or hobbies and celebrate small successes along your journey.

Emphasise on wellness

Prioritise your physical, mental, and psychological health. Establish boundaries, practise mindfulness, and schedule time for self-care.

Sustainability and responsibility

Choose to live more wisely as each decision counts, whether it is to lessen rubbish, preserve energy, or support environmentally beneficial initiatives.

Be thankful

Reflect on past gains and lessons. Gratitude generates a positive mindset and creates the mood for the rest of the year.

Strive to dream big

2025 could be the year to realise long-held ambitions. Trust in your capability and be persistent.

The best way to Island hop



Make the most of your holiday with a trip to Praslin.
On the short 15 minutes flight from Mahé, you can enjoy
a bird's eye view of the Seychelles beautiful inner islands.

With over 20 daily departures, getting there and back has never been easier.

Charter services are also available.



Book your ticket on airseychelles.com
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MyStay

Discover Seychelles with C&W's MyStay Prepaid Mobile SIM Collector's Pack, tailor-made for tourists! Get the perfect mobile data and local minutes combo to stay connected as you explore, relax, and enjoy island life.

MyStay 10GB

10GB

60 minutes

SCR588

Valid for 21 Days



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Prepaid Mobile Service
Available at airports, jetties,
and all CWS Service Centres!
Terms & Conditions apply



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