

# silhouette

Inflight Magazine for Air Seychelles • April - June 2023





# STAR CASINO

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## Dear Guests, Welcome aboard!

I hope you have settled in comfortably onboard our aircraft and are ready to fly the Creole Spirit with us. It has been a busy three months for us at Air Seychelles and we have so much to share with you.

Following the successful completion of the intense comprehensive standard aviation safety audit conducted in August 2022, I am pleased to announce that our national airline has once again been certified by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) for the completion of the IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA).

Held every two years, the audit verifies if the airline is operating in adherence to global industry compliance and safety standards, whilst the IOSA standards are continuously being upgraded and adjusted. Each time this is done, recommended practices addressing any gaps are welcomed and taken on board meticulously by the relevant teams, ensuring the airline continues to conform to the most challenging industry standards. With safety remaining our top priority in everything that we do, and now having successfully renewed our certification, I extend my congratulations to all the teams who were involved in the audit process for their professionalism and diligence throughout.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate all the operational staff members for keeping an exemplary safety record for Air Seychelles and for operating on par with safety standards that are internationally recognised.

We also have developments on our network, so I invite you to visit our website to keep informed. During the Easter holidays, we are facilitating access to our beautiful islands even more by adding extra flights on our Johannesburg sector and maintaining three flights a week all the way through to September due to increased demand. We are also adding the financial centre of Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, onto our network in the near future and will be pleased to share this information with you through our various platforms.

Until then, enjoy the journey and thank you for choosing Air Seychelles!



**Captain Sandy Benoiton**  
Acting Chief Executive Officer



“  
**Safety  
remains our  
top priority**  
”



# Features



## Cobbled streets & ancient charms

It's the low-key charm and ancient history of Jaffa that is the true highlight of any visit to the city. It is enjoying a new lease on life, once again drawing pilgrims and travellers from across the globe to its charming cobbled streets.



## A monument to faith

Hagia Sophia is a living monument to a bygone age when classical Islamic architecture, exquisite art and elaborate craftsmanship defined the most admired public spaces.



## Wonderful walks on Mauritius

The island's myriad walking trails offer an easy way to tap into the abundant natural beauty. There are peaks and trails across national parks and historic peaks, and many of them can be discovered on your own, at your own pace.



## Run/Cycle/Walk/Scoot

Step outside for an authentic immersion into Africa's commercial and cultural capital, Johannesburg. It's an urban jungle out there so sign up with one of the locally guided tours to explore and get to grips with all that eGoli has to offer.





48

## Colombo

Nestled on the southwestern coast of Sri Lanka, just south of the Kelani River, Colombo is a bustling and vibrant city that seamlessly blends the country's rich history and modernity.



58

## Gateway to the Maldives

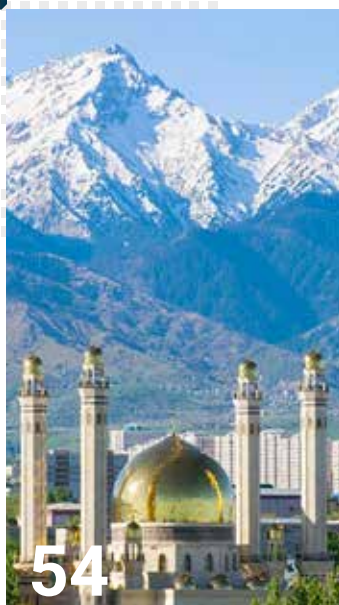
The billion-dollar project will create a state-of-the-art Velana International Airport (VIA) that represents important Maldivian values and culture through its world-class facilities and services.



42

## Furiously energetic

Mumbai is a smorgasbord of varied experiences. It is a delightful juxtaposition of contrasts. The striking incongruousness between its sobriquet of being the fashion epicentre of the country and the city's multiple shabby appearances is enigmatic.



54

## The apple city

Almaty has plenty to offer from skiing and hiking to spa retreats and museum tours. However, more than anything, it offers the chance to visit a relatively under-explored and untouched area for tourists.



# Regulars



01

**Chief Executive Officer's message**

06

**Kaleidoscope**

Local and international news; Smart fitness technology.

16

**The grand diversity of Seychelles**

Multiple islands can be experienced within a day, with no two islands being the same. Like members of a family, every island has its own distinct character; with hidden gems, must-see attractions and beautiful beaches.

65

**Inside Air Seychelles**

Air Seychelles news, Air Seychelles global offices; International route map and fleet; Travel tips.



**Cover image**  
Desroches Island, Seychelles  
Image © unsplash.com

# silhouette

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MAGAZINES LTD.

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## International Conference on Chemical, Biological and Environmental Engineering (ICCBEE)

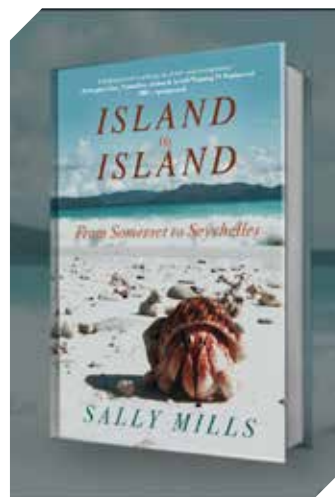
Date: 18-19 May 2023

Venue: Anse Boileau, Seychelles

The conference provides a platform for professionals involved in chemical, biological and environmental engineering to exchange knowledge and gain an insight into the state-of-the-art in the current technology, techniques and solutions in Chemical, Biological and Environmental Engineering Science as they have been developed and applied in different countries. Participants include a wide variety of stakeholders from research and academia, to industrial sectors as well as government organisations.



## Book Shelf



## Island to Island

From Somerset to Seychelles  
By Sally Mills

Swapping UK tranquillity for tropical tempestuousness 'So, nature lover Sally goes to a desert island smothered in wildlife, floating in a tropical ocean, to live a simple cavewoman existence... sounds good. But there are biting insects, monsoons and other humans... which prove ominous. The result is a trial full of sometimes terrible tribulations, thankfully studded with moments of awe-inspiring perfection as the 21st century Miss Crusoe lays her conservation crusade frankly bare. Spoiler alert – she survives, but at what price for the dream?'  
Chris Packham.

The only way I was ever going to be tempted to leave the safety and comfort of the UK was to a project of the magnitude and appeal of a tropical island in Seychelles. As an author and illustrator having worked in a secure job in nature conservation for 25 years, it wasn't an easy decision to break away, but it was the opportunity of a lifetime...

My partner and I had secured the jobs of managing Aride Island, a tropical nature reserve located in the middle of the Indian Ocean and part of the Seychelles granitic group. Having escaped the invasion of predators such as rats and cats, it is known for its internationally significant wildlife populations and remains the richest of the granitic islands and home to over a million seabirds. Its south facing beach provides egg laying sites for green and hawksbill turtles, the sand covered ground crawls with crabs, it boasts the world's highest density of lizards with over one per square metre, fairy terns hover round your head and Seychelles magpie robins join you for breakfast.

However, although a nature lover's dream, at just 1 mile long by 0.4-mile-wide, no running water or electricity and only 6 other human inhabitants, life was going to be very different! Our jobs over there were to manage the island and all that involved; protecting and monitoring wildlife, habitat works, improving living conditions, managing a small team, and meeting and greeting guests.

After our 20-month stay, I began writing and illustrating a book to record the memorable time spent in this amazing tropical paradise, but was it all sun, sea and sand? Swapping UK tranquillity for tropical tempestuousness, the illustrated novel, 'Island to Island' portrays a rare insight to a dynamic and challenging, yet privileged existence living on a remote island – it tells the real story.

Complete with over 100 watercolour illustrations, the book has wide appeal; natural history/wildlife lovers, readers interested in conservation, travel and culture, those wanting escapism, or simply inspiration to explore a new challenge. So if you are looking for a captivating read whilst on holiday, a souvenir of your time in tropical paradise or a present for your return, look out for 'Island to Island'.

[www.somersetmacaw.com](http://www.somersetmacaw.com)

Profit proceeds from sales of the novel will be donated to St Kentigern's Hospice, UK.



## Constitution Day

Date: 18 June 2023

Venue: Victoria

Seychelles Constitution Day, also called National Day, is celebrated on June 18 yearly, marking the declaration of the referendum in 1993 that made Seychelles a multi-party democracy. It is celebrated on the three main islands, Mahé, Praslin and La Digue. Flag hoisting is done in the morning by Seychellois men and women in uniform and the national anthem is played in front of distinguished guests and dignitaries. Then the President addresses the Nation. Seychelles Constitution Day involves a parade in Stad Linité with the President and high government officials present.

## Independence Day

Date: 29 June 2023

Venue: Victoria

Independence Day is the most important occasion in Seychelles as it is linked to a defining moment in its history. This date symbolises the birth of a people, hope for the future, the achievement of victory, the crowning of a struggle. It also represents the unity of a people in a great manifestation of patriotic fervour. Seychelles has been a member of the Commonwealth of Nations ever since it was granted independence in 1976. Seychellois and visitors to Seychelles will be treated to impressive displays of national pride and patriotism during the National Day celebrations and will as usual be seen waving the colourful blue, yellow, red, white and green Seychelles flags as fireworks displays light up the evening skies.

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## Buddha Purnima

**Date:** 5 May 2023

**Venue:** India

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

## Israel Festival

**Date:** May to mid-June 2023

**Venue:** Jerusalem

The Israel Festival is a unique intersection between the international and Israeli fields of all performing arts. It brings together artists and creators from Israel and abroad. The festival is a famed and celebrated multi-disciplinary event, presenting high-quality productions in the disciplines of dance, music, theatre, and performance from around the world, as well as original productions from Israel. It is a celebration for all, and includes outdoor performances open to the public. The festival is one of the most known cultural events in Jerusalem in Israel and around the world. A significant part of the festival is the artistic collaboration taking place on historical sites and institutions in Jerusalem, such as the Jerusalem Theatre, Tower of David, Sultan's Pool, Gerard Becher, Beit Mazia Theater, YMCA, Beit Shmuel, Hansen House, the First Station Complex, Ein Kerem and the Israel Museum.



## SAITEX

**Date:** 18-20 June 2023

**Venue:** Gallagher Convention Centre, Johannesburg

**https://www.globalafricanetwork.com/events/saitex-2023/**

SAITEX is the original multi-sector trade-show allowing local and international importers and exporters to test, explore and take advantage of inbound and outbound trade opportunities within the African Region. The event facilitates tangible international and local trade relationships, whilst providing a platform for the private sector to demonstrate the innovations, solutions, and services they have to offer Africa.

## Eid al-Fitr

**Date:** 21-22 April 2023

**Venue:** Malé, Maldives

Eid is very widely celebrated in the Maldives and the day begins with an early morning Eid prayer, a congregational event with the mosque flooding with worshippers. Family and friends usually travel together, escaping the busy city life, and others visit loved ones back home to show the friendship and love between everyone.

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



## Sakifo Musik Festival

**Venue:** Ravine Blanche, Saint-Pierre, Réunion Island

A popular music festival in Mauritius ongoing for 18 years. It is considered the biggest music festival in the entire Indian Ocean. Celebrated each year for three days at the Reunion Island and attended by almost 40,000 people, Sakifo Festival unites the local, national, Indian Ocean and international artists. It is a free and open to all event, the proceedings of which are donated to the association of fishermen's wives.

# Совершите путешествие всей жизни и откройте для себя рай с Air Seychelles

Подобно драгоценным камням в Индийском океане, Сейшельские острова представляют собой архипелаг из 115 островов, с каждого из которых открывается уникальный и захватывающий дух вид на море. Всемирно известный своими многочисленными пляжами с белым песком, пышной тропической зеленью, яркой культурой и непревзойденной кухней, он также является домом для двух объектов всемирного наследия ЮНЕСКО и предлагает незабываемые впечатления от посещения и изучения.

Райские окрестности Сейшельских островов, некогда считавшиеся подлинным Райским садом, являются домом для ультра-роскошных отелей и частных островных курортов, обеспечивающих идеальный фон для великолепного медового месяца или спокойного уединения.

Путешественникам с ограниченным бюджетом также доступны недорогие варианты благодаря коллекции местных отелей и гостевых домов, все из которых предлагают лучшее из подлинного креольского гостеприимства.

Множество островов могут похвастаться захватывающими дух уединенными пляжами и самыми живописными пешеходными тропами для тех, кто нуждается в отдыхе или приключениях. Независимо от того, путешествуете ли вы в одиночку или наслаждаетесь семейным отдыхом, здесь действительно найдется что-то для каждого.

Где бы вы ни оказались на нашем райском острове, будьте готовы быть поражены захватывающими закатами, самыми аппетитными блюдами, дружелюбными улыбками и лучшими возможностями для фотосъемки.



Air Seychelles также предлагает сообщение с соседними островами Маврикий, предоставляя больше возможностей для отдыха в тропиках. Посетите наш веб-сайт [www.airseychelles.com](http://www.airseychelles.com) чтобы забронировать отпуск своей мечты у нас.



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# Smarter Fitness Technology

With new devices, capabilities, and product categories being introduced every year, 2022 saw wellness tech continue to boom and grow. While there were many new products that emerged, the biggest trends were the growth and maturation of existing smart fitness technology, meditation and mindfulness, and sleep-tracking technology. © 2023 www.makeuseof.com

Some of the products and use cases that will continue to redefine consumer fitness and overall health:

## AirPhysio

When you exhale through AirPhysio, gentle pulses of positive pressure are created in your lungs and airways. These pulses expand airways and help loosen excess mucus, so you can clear it out naturally with productive coughing – allowing you to finally breathe again. It's proven effective – and you will feel it working immediately. AirPhysio helps clear the excess mucus build-up that is responsible for clogging up your lungs. The gentle pulses of pressure quickly open up blocked and semi-closed airways. This natural technique allows you to finally breathe freely again.

USD 41.00



## TrueKinetix TrueTrainer

It's a state-of-the-art indoor bike trainer that uses robotics and AI to make the pedal force feel more natural through something the company calls TrueForce Technology. The TrueTrainer has a max resistance of 2,600 watts, which TrueKinetix says can meet the demand of the best cycling sprinters in the world.

You can connect the device to an external monitor via HDMI and third-party apps like Zwift and Rouvy via Bluetooth, ANT+, and Wi-Fi. What's more, the energy you generate by pedalling powers the device.

USD 3,520.00





### Alphabeats

A portable, headband-style tool that monitors brain activity and uses music to help athletes enter a flow state.

Flow is characterised by alpha brainwaves and is commonly associated with high performance. The device is equipped with EEG sensors and uses music-based biofeedback to trigger your brain into producing higher alpha brainwave activity. Regular use of the device can result in noticeable improvements in your mental function over time. **USD 356.00**



### AeviceMD

It is a smart wearable stethoscope. The lightweight sensor continuously and passively analyses chest sounds and logs measurements for respiratory rate, heart rate, and wheeze into a companion app.

Powered by AI, the device can also detect and analyse abnormal lung sounds to determine if what it hears is indicative of diseases like asthma and COPD, potentially allowing for early health interventions. This provides patients with a continuum of personalised medical care from the comfort of their homes.

**USD 59.99**



### ErgoSportive Smart Bed

Designed to support athletes and fitness enthusiasts, the ErgoSportive is a smart, adjustable bed frame that uses smart sensor technology to monitor your sleep activities. When used in conjunction with a Garmin wearable (which comes with the bed) you can access unique sleep data and get individualised recovery advice through the bed's companion app. The ErgoSportive features built-in vibration motors to help you relax and a flexible base that allows you to change the shape of the bed depending on what you're using it for. It also features an anti-snoring function designed to automatically modify the bed's position to stop you from snoring in the middle of the night, helping you re-enter and stay in deep sleep longer. **USD 3,600.00 – 6,000.00**



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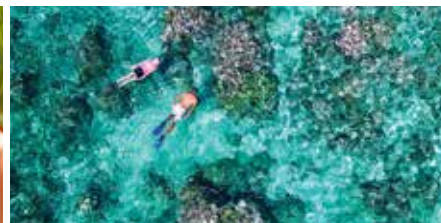




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## The grand diversity of Seychelles

Its flora and fauna, an invitation to visitors to enjoy  
its culture via Creole Rendezvous.

WORDS: GLYNN BURRIDGE





The 155 islands of the Seychelles Archipelago (as per the constitution of the Republic of Seychelles) lie scattered across their secret corner of the western Indian Ocean like precious gemstones set in a universe of azure water thousands of miles from anywhere else.

Seychelles, straddling the western Indian Ocean between 6 and 10 degrees south of the equator, is divided into six island groups with the Inner Islands of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue together with their neighbouring isles forming the hub of the islands' tourism industry.

Seychelles enjoys massive diversity of islands. The 74 coralline outer islands, reef islands, sand cays and shimmering atolls appear to be strung like pearls on invisible threads. Many such islands remain virtually untouched since they slumbered in their first innocence millennia ago.

Measuring 27 kilometre long and 8 kilometre wide, Mahé, the principal island is a mountainous, granitic island that boasts no less than 65 beaches. The fascinating underwater treasure houses of the St. Anne and Cap Ternay Marine National Parks, can be visited on snorkelling expeditions and a variety of excursions.

Nothing introduces you and puts you in touch with adventure more than island hopping to see the incredible diversity of the island archipelago. Multiple islands can be experienced within a day, with no two islands being the same. Like members of a family, every island has its own distinct character; with hidden gems, must-see attractions and beautiful beaches.

When it comes to things to do, there is a wide choice of world-class fishing, sailing and diving as well as spa and wellness retreats, honeymoons

and romance, trekking, island-hopping and golf. A network of air and sea connections places these islands within easy reach, with a varied choice of excursions, both land and marine, available through local operators offering exclusive experiences tailored to suit your budget, introducing you to the very best that Seychelles has to offer.

Our islands' diversity even extends magnificently to its population into whose fabric has been gradually stitched the strands of multiple ethnicities from across the globe since that time when the islands were first settled here in 1770. European settlers, African slaves, migrants from India, China, the Middle East and beyond, all have found their destinies entwined on these shores along with their cultures, architecture, cuisine and, finally, their love of life as a proud Creole nation where harmony has become a way of life.

Today, these islands have retained much of their Gondwanan character, existing as a chain of Noah's Arks and harbouring some of the rarest species of flora & fauna on the planet. Today, the islands, justifiably, form a part of the Western Indian Ocean Biodiversity Hotspot.

Seychelles boasts two UNESCO World Heritage sites. The extraordinary primeval valley known as the Vallée de Mai, where grows the legendary, double-lobed coconut the Coco-de-Mer. And magnificent Aldabra, the world's largest raised coral atoll with its population of some 150,000 giant land tortoises and many other treasures besides.

The panoply of trees covering the 41 granitic islands and 1,500 species of flowering plants, contain some of the rarest specimens on the planet.



These include the amazing Jellyfish Tree, of which only a handful of specimens remain, the carnivorous pitcher plant and 75 other species of rare, endemic plant-life. Much of Seychelles' extraordinary biodiversity may be discovered on its extensive network of guided walks and trails as well as in its National Parks.

Seychelles is an ornithologist's paradise. Several islands are home to birds found only there, and nowhere else. On Praslin, the famous Seychelles black parrot can still be found flitting among the palms of the Vallée de Mai. La Digue island is host to another rare endemic bird, the Paradise Flycatcher.

Mahé's forests provide sanctuary for yet another of the world's rare birds, the Bare-legged Scops Owl, thought to have become extinct for more than a century, before being rediscovered in 1959. Altogether, the islands are home to 13 species and 17 sub-species of birdlife which occur nowhere else in the world. Several of the archipelago's islands are nature reserves in their own right, showcasing rare birdlife and other prized species. Seychelles' eco attractions are not confined to birds as its population of those extraordinary reptiles, the Giant land tortoise, is the largest in the world. Apart from the indigenous population on Aldabra, there are many other specimens, and rare species of tortoise, dotted about the islands.

Other native reptiles include the Freshwater Terrapin, the Seychelles Tiger Chameleon as well as several species of Skink and Gecko. The only native mammals in Seychelles are bats: The Seychelles fruit bat and the Sheath-tailed Bat. Interesting insects include the endemic grasshopper,

well-camouflaged stick insects, of which there are 5 endemic species, and the endemic tenebrionid beetle, found on Frégate Island.

Marine life in Seychelles is prolific. Seychelles' several Marine National Parks offer an ideal introduction to the underwater delights of the Inner Islands as there exists a surprising abundance of fish, even on shallow inshore reefs.

Due to its extreme isolation, Seychelles has received more than its fair share of Nature's bounty and today, with nearly half its limited landmass set aside as nature reserves, the ecological integrity of its islands remains intact – providing the visitor with some of the most unique ecological experiences to be found anywhere.

An increasingly important touchpoint for visitors to enjoy is the vibrant Seychelles culture. A new initiative to allow visitors to enjoy that aspect of the country – Creole Rendezvous – is now being implemented throughout the islands in the form of street bazaars where to enjoy the delicious Seychellois Creole cuisine as well as a raft of other activities showcasing captivating aspects of culture such as music, dance and the diverse art scene as well.

This fresh look at providing our visitors with memorable touchpoints via which they can 'get beneath the skin' of Seychelles during their vacation is in recognition of the fact that many visitors seek more than a traditional sun, sea and sand holiday and wish to experience the unique, unplugged Seychelles-slow lifestyle first hand from the Seychellois people themselves. 🌴



# Cobbled streets & ancient charms

While the bright lights of Tel Aviv may shine brightly out across the Mediterranean, for many travellers it's the low-key charm and ancient history of Jaffa that is the true highlight of any visit to the city.

WORDS: RICHARD HOLMES





Overlooking the Mediterranean Sea



With its bustling pavements, chic galleries and shimmering high-rises Tel Aviv is a city brimming with exuberant energy; renowned as much for its nightlife as its vibrant culinary scene. Dating back little more than a century, it's the energetic youngster of the Mediterranean.

But just three kilometres to the south, the city shows an entirely different character in the old district of Jaffa, often referred to as Tel Aviv-Yafo. And while today it rests somewhat in the shadow of the skyscrapers of the main city to the north, the cobble streets and winding alleys of Jaffa are really where it all began.

Jaffa is hailed as one of the oldest harbours in the world, mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible as 'Joppa'. It was in Joppa that the disciple Peter raised Tabitha from the dead, and from here, it is said, that Jonah set sail before his legendary encounter with a whale. While the veracity of those stories is up for debate, what isn't in any doubt is that the port was also where many Jewish settlers and religious pilgrims first set foot in Israel during the late 19th century.

So begin your wandering at Jaffa port, which is still used by working fishermen today. Away from the quayside many of the original warehouses have been transformed into gallery spaces, hosting art and photography exhibitions, while bars and restaurants offer charming al fresco dining





**Bell tower, a landmark of Jaffa**



**Walking towards Jaffa Gate**



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with views of the old harbour. Allow time to visit the Na Laga'at; a remarkable non-profit arts and cultural centre focused on providing opportunities for deaf and blind people. The centre is also home to the unique BlackOut restaurant, the only one of its kind in Israel, with diners enjoying their meal in utter darkness, challenging your sense of taste and perception while offering an insight into the life of the visually impaired.

Away from the water, the labyrinthine lanes and limestone stairways offer a wonderfully atmospheric corner of the city. It's a place where happy hours can be spent wandering aimlessly, admiring the galleries, workshops and restaurants that sprout from carved doorways. Certainly don't miss the wonderful Ilana Goor museum. Housed in an 18th century building this striking gallery space is home to hundreds of works by both Israeli and international artists, from Henry Moore and Uri Lifshitz to Shahrar Sarig.

Keep meandering further north and you'll soon find yourself at the door of St. Peter's Church,

one of the oldest in the region. First erected in 1654, and largely rebuilt in the late-1800s, the striking bell tower of this Franciscan Church has long been an icon of Jaffa, and a landmark across the city. Indoors, the stained glass windows and soaring arches are reminiscent of the great churches of Europe, with the pews offering a welcome break from the bustle outdoors.

Just a short walk from the church brings you to Abrasha Park, with glorious views out over the Mediterranean and across the skyline of Tel Aviv. If the wander here has made you warm, you're in luck: the Jaffa beachfront is just a short way downhill and ideal for a quick dip before you continue exploring.

From Abrasha Park you'll want a quick stop at the iconic clock tower. Made of honey-coloured limestone, the clock tower dates back more than a century and is a useful landmark at the northern end of Yefet Street.

Now, mark this spot on your map as you'll want to return here for dinner. You're just a few steps from Ramesses, which opens in the evening with a deliciously eclectic menu. It's a happy collision

of Israeli, Indian and Greek influences, from octopus, served piping hot from the charcoal grill with roasted onion rings and tzatziki of zucchini, to a ceviche of fresh fish in Indian marinade topped with fragrant mint leaves. It's a deliciously inventive take on the cuisine of the Mediterranean.

But that's dinner. Until then keep strolling through the streets to find the Jaffa Flea Market, also known as Shuk Hapishpishim.

This treasure trove of antiques and collectables is a must-visit, whether you're simply window-shopping or browsing for bargains to take home. Amid the winding alleys, you'll find a wide array of vendors selling everything from homeware to Persian rugs. Remember that bargaining is expected, so sharpen your haggling skills to save a few shekels. Need a break? Stop in at BeerBazaar for a taste of local craft beer from the rotating selection of Israeli breweries.

Alongside the market's antique sellers, you'll also find a clutch of contemporary design stores offering more modern keepsakes from Jaffa.





View of the old harbour



Cobbled Street

Certainly don't miss a wander through SAGA, which showcases a clutch of Israel's most exciting young designers. It's also worth a detour to Hilweh Market on Yefet Street. This tiny store is filled with both contemporary and traditional crafts from the city's Palestinian community.

Just around the corner, the Beit Kandino complex is equally worth exploring. Set in a historic building, the complex of gallery spaces combines a rotating series of exhibitions by contemporary Israeli artists with a fine-dining space celebrating the cuisine of the Levant, much of it made using ingredients from the local market and the restaurant's own gardens.

While it's tempting to keep wandering these mesmerising streets, soon enough you'll need to find a bed for the night. And – if your pockets allow – there is no finer address in the city than The Jaffa.

First opened in 1879 as a hospital for religious pilgrims arriving at the port, a dramatic reinvention – at a cost of \$500-million – over the past decade has established The Jaffa as one of the leading boutique hotels in the region. Painstaking renovations and sensitive architectural enhancements by British design

John Pawson have created a nexus of 19th- and 21st-century design, where the intimate seating in the lounge bar rests beneath the original frescoes of the hospital chapel, and the 120 spacious guest rooms and suites boast vaulted ceilings and balconies opening out onto lush gardens and views of the ancient city. On warm summer days, the courtyard pool is nothing short of an oasis.

The Jaffa is perhaps a perfect mirror of the characterful streets that lie just beyond the walls. This historic space has been revitalised, showcasing the history, culture and traditions of the region in a thoroughly modern aesthetic. Much like the city of Jaffa itself, this ancient corner of the Mediterranean is enjoying a new lease on life, once again drawing pilgrims and travellers from across the globe to its charming cobbled streets. 🌿



Flight information: [www.airseychelles.com](http://www.airseychelles.com)









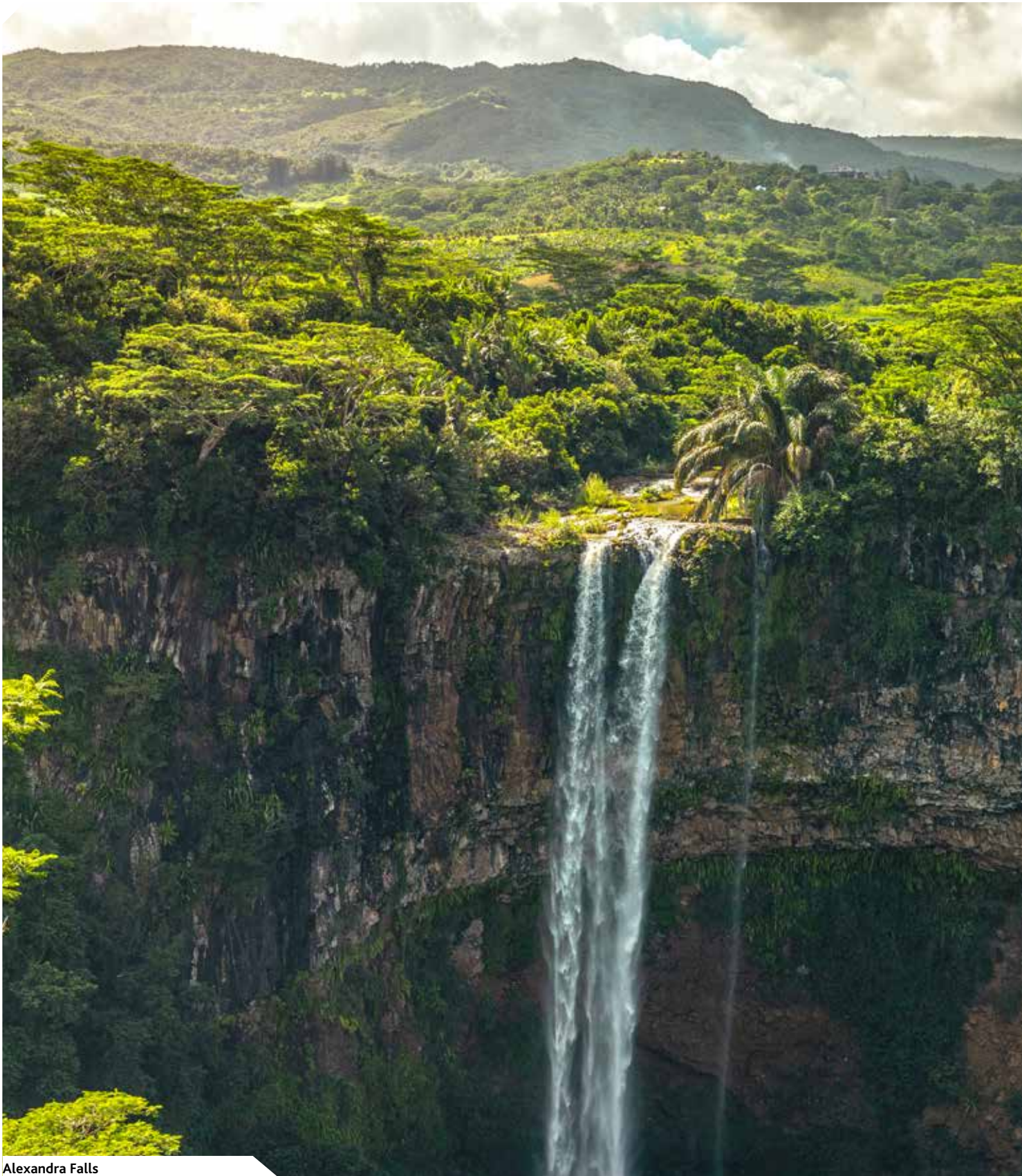
# Wonderful walks on Mauritius

Lace up your boots and leave the lounge behind.  
It's time to hit the hiking trails of Mauritius...

WORDS: RICHARD HOLMES

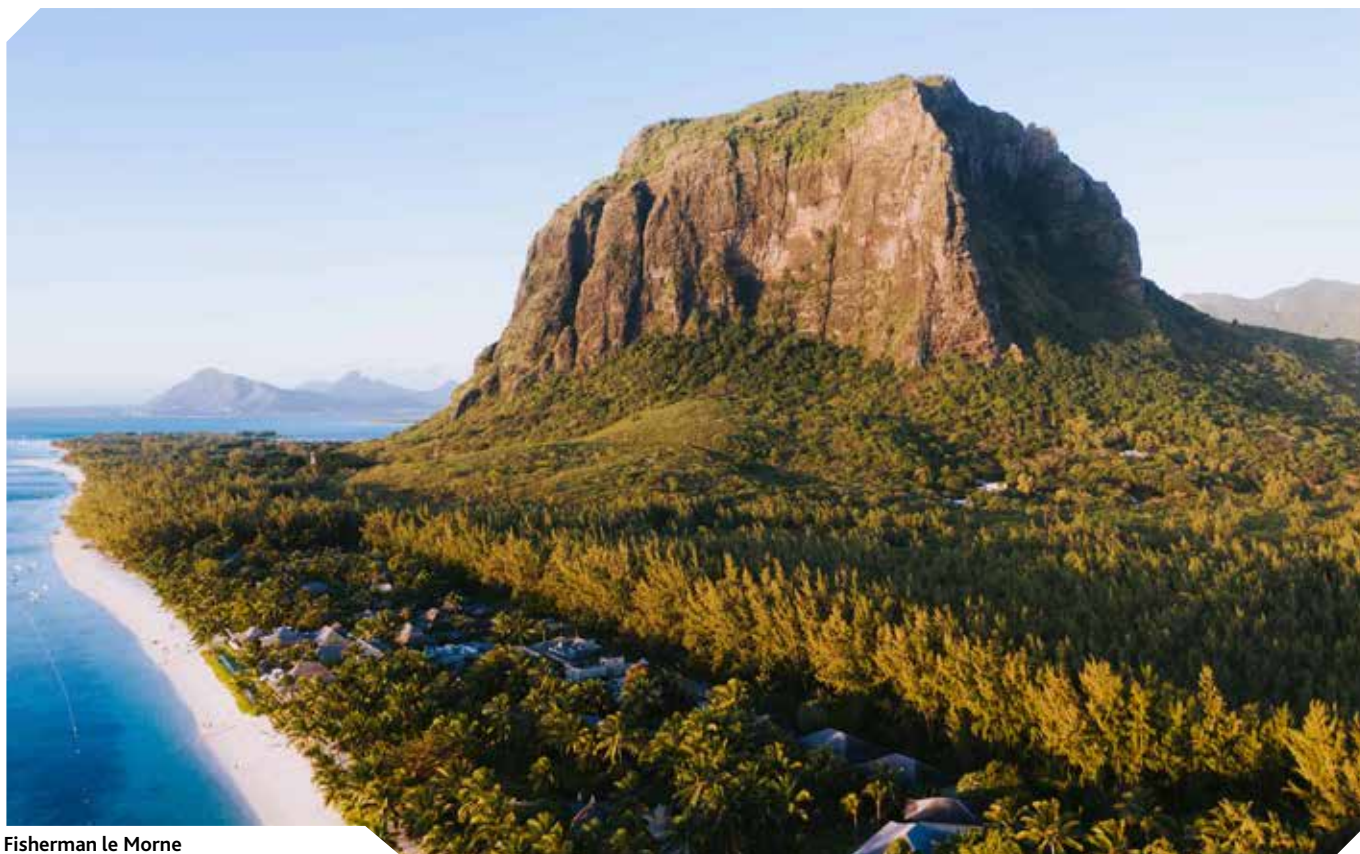






Alexandra Falls





Fisherman le Morne

With white coral sands and year-round warm waters, it's with good reason that Mauritius is known as one of the world's finest beach holiday destinations. A place for fly-and-flop vacations, where perhaps your only worry is whether the next piña colada will arrive in time, and days are filled with sparkling pools and turquoise seas.

But away from coastline there's an entire island waiting to be explored, filled with adventures great and small. And the easiest way to find them is to simply lace up your walking shoes. Once you've relaxed into your holiday, and eased into island time, cast that book aside, haul yourself off the lounge and head out.

At the 2022 World Travel Awards (WTA) Mauritius was named the leading destination for adventure tourism in the Indian Ocean, and the island's myriad walking trails off an easy way to tap into the abundant natural beauty of Mauritius. There are peaks and trails across national parks and historic peaks, and many of them can be discovered on your own, at your own pace.

But what if you don't feel up to exploring on your own? Savvy resorts are waking up to the demand from travellers to get active too, with the likes of C Mauritius on the east coast actively including outdoor adventures into the guest experience.

That's how I found myself halfway up the peak of Le Pouce – 'the thumb' – in the north of the island one bright summery morning. It's one of the most popular climbs in Mauritius, easily accessible from most resorts, and with a clear path that's easy to follow for most of the way up. It's a stiff climb, but my breath was taken away as much by the views as the incline. To the north, the streets of Port Louis embrace the shoreline, while the panoramic coastal views showed the true island beauty of Ile Maurice.

I was glad to have a guide on the final section though, where the steep and eroded path became mildly treacherous for all but the most sure-footed of hikers. But from the summit, the effort was well worth sweating it out in the tropical heat.



Ebony forest



Topping out at 814 metres above sea level, Le Pouce is the third-highest peak on the island, with just a few metres separating the top three mountains to add to your hiking hit list. To the east, seemingly just out of reach, is the craggy summit of Pieter Both Peak, a shade higher at 820 metres with its signature boulder perched on top. The high point of the island – Black River Peak – lies in the south, in the Black River Gorges National Park, and rises to a marginally higher 828 metres. And if you only leave time for a single day of proper hiking, set it aside to discover this remarkable national park.

A far cry from the busy beaches of the coast, this spectacular national park is ideal for escaping the crowds. Stretching across more than 6,700 hectares, the largest national park in Mauritius is famous for its tumbling waterfalls, rugged peaks and panoramic views.

It is one of the largest national parks in Mauritius and is considered a treasure trove of the country's natural heritage. The park is home to a diverse array of plant and animal species, including endemic and endangered species, such as the Mauritian flying fox.

The park is characterised by its hilly terrain, deep valleys, and gorges that are covered by lush vegetation, including endemic species such as the giant tambalacoque tree and Mauritian ebony. From the Le Pétrin information centre you'll find a network of hiking trails crisscrossing this large conservation area, offering access to some of the island's most dramatic scenery. Highlights include the Piton Mauritius and Macchabées trails, both of which offer panoramic views.

The Black River Gorges National Park is home to a wide range of indigenous flora, but – twitchers take note – is equally famous for its endemic birdlife. Self-guided walks are possible, but we'd recommend you go with a local trekking guide, for safety in the mountains and to properly discover the fauna and flora.

Not far from here is another icon of the island, Le Morne Brabant.

Arguably the island's best preserved and wildest mountain, this UNESCO World Heritage Site offers a rewarding hike if you're after an adventurous day out in Mauritius.



**Aerial view of Chamarel**

The hike is one of the more strenuous outings on the island, with a total elevation gain of 556 metres, but the stunning views from the summit make the effort well worth it. The hike usually takes around three hours, and the trail is clearly marked and well-maintained.

The trail passes through a variety of landscapes, including dense indigenous vegetation, rocky terrain and open fields, providing a diverse and beautiful experience that delivers breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape, including the turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean and coral reef encircling the island.

Some sections of the trail require scrambling, and are quite exposed, making this a challenging hike that requires a good level of fitness, as well as appropriate gear, such as comfortable hiking shoes. Carrying plenty of water is essential.

For a more relaxed walk, head for Tamarind Falls, one of the most popular tourist outings on the island.

Also known as the Seven Cascades for its series of tumbling cataracts, this approachable walk is best enjoyed as a full-day excursion with a local guide, which will allow ample time to discover the island's lush indigenous forest and enjoy a dip in the natural pools at the foot of the falls.

Another easy wander that's ideal for exploring on your own is the La Vallée de Ferney, a







The Black River Gorges National Park



Trois Mamelles

200-hectare conservancy working to protect and conserve tree species indigenous to the island. There are a variety of trails on offer, ranging from five to 20 kilometres in length, exploring a forest sanctuary filled with ebony, ravenala and takamaka trees. And, if you're lucky, you have a chance of spotting the Mauritian falcons that nest here.

It's all a far cry from kicking back on the lounge and soaking up the sunshine. While you've certainly earned your holiday on Ile Maurice, it's worth taking a day – or two – to tackle the island's wonderful walking trails. 🌿



### When to plan a hiking holiday

The best time to go hiking in Mauritius is from May to December, during the dry season. During this time, the weather is mild and the trails are less likely to be wet and slippery, making it easier and safer to hike. However, temperatures can get quite hot during the day, so it is best to start your hike early in the morning or later in the afternoon when the temperature is cooler.

From January to April, Mauritius experiences its rainy season, with heavy rainfall and high humidity levels. This can make hiking more challenging, as the trails can become slippery and difficult to navigate. The risk of flash floods also increases during this time.



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# Hagia Sophia

WORDS: PETER HOLTHUSEN





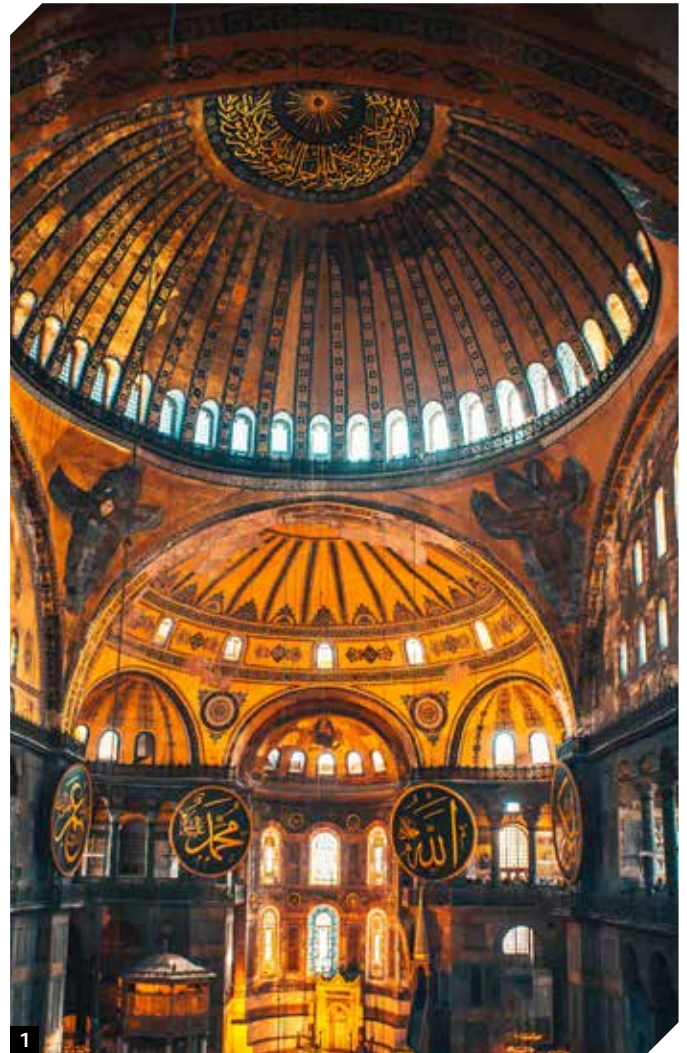
The imposing Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque in Turkey's bustling capital, more often referred to as the Hagia Sophia, is a living monument to a bygone age when classical Islamic architecture, exquisite art and elaborate craftsmanship defined the most admired public spaces. The striking cultural forms and often dazzling ornamental detail that so often characterises Islamic buildings of this size include some of the most awe-inspiring structures on Earth and are a testament to a centuries-old category of architecture that is rooted in the very principles of Islam.

So, it might come as a surprise to know that Hagia Sophia, which is one of the world's most famous mosques and Istanbul's most iconic cultural and historical site was originally a Greek Orthodox Church from 360 AD until the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

The current structure was built by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, also known as 'Justinian the Great', as the Christian Cathedral of Constantinople which became the state church of the Byzantine Empire between 532 and 537 AD and was designed by the notable Greek architects and geometers, Isidore of Miletus and Anthemius of Tralles. It was formally called the 'Church of the Holy Wisdom' and upon completion, became the world's largest interior space and among the first to employ a fully pendentive dome, which is a constructional device permitting the placing of a circular dome over a square room or of an elliptical dome over a rectangular room.

They built the Hagia Sophia in great haste, finishing it in less than six years. To put this in comparison it took over 35 years for Sir Christopher Wren to build St Paul's Cathedral in London and well over a century for medieval builders to construct the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Paris.

This short construction period appears to have led to problems. Ancient sources, such as the Greek writer and late antiquity scholar Procopius, write that the builders had problems with the dome roof, the structure almost collapsing during construction. The dome used a system of long







3



4

piers to channel its weight. "The piers on top of which the structure was being built, unable to bear the mass that was pressing down on them, somehow or other suddenly started to break away and seemed to be on the point of collapsing ..." writes Procopius.

Isidore and Anthemius did eventually succeed in getting the domed roof to stand and it was a magnificent sight indeed. "It seems not to be founded on solid masonry, but to be suspended from heaven by that golden chain and so cover the space," wrote Procopius.

Unfortunately, this roof did not stand for long. It collapsed about two decades later and it fell to a man named Isidore the Younger, a nephew of Isidore of Miletus to build a new domed roof. It has lasted, with some rudimentary repairs, nearly 1,400 years, down to the present day, even surviving a succession of earthquakes.

Hagia Sophia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is famous for the light that reflects everywhere in the interior of the nave, giving the dome the appearance of hovering above. This effect was achieved by inserting 40 windows around the base of the original structure. Moreover, the insertion of the windows in the dome structure reduced its weight.

The sunlight emanating from the windows surrounding its lofty cupola, suffusing the interior and irradiating its gold mosaics, seems to dissolve the solidity of the walls and creates an ambience of ineffable mystery. On the completion of Hagia Sophia, Justinian is said to have remarked, "Solomon, I have outdone thee."

Modern-day visitors will note that the Hagia Sophia has two levels, the ground floor and a gallery above. The presence of two levels may have meant that worshipers were originally organised according to gender and class when services were held at the cathedral. In Byzantine churches galleries seem to have been used as a means of segregation of genders and of social classes.

In the Byzantine period part of the gallery in Hagia Sophia was used as an imperial loge, or private enclosure, from which the empress and occasionally the emperor attended the services. This loge wasn't the only benefit they received. To enter the cathedral's nave from the narthex at the western entrance there are nine doorways. The central door or Imperial Gate was reserved for the use of the emperor and his attendants and provides the most perfect approach to the interior of the church.

The decorations within the Hagia Sophia at the time of construction were probably very simple, images of crosses for instance. Over time this changed to include a variety of ornate mosaics. There are a number of mosaics that have been added over the centuries, portraits of the imperial family, images of Christ and different emperors, those have been added since Justinian's day.

Of these exquisite mosaics, the two archangels Gabriel and Michael are still visible in the spandrels (corners) of the bema (orator's podium). There were already a few figurative decorations, as attested by the late 6th century ekphrasis of Paul the Silentiary, the 'Description of Hagia Sophia'.



In the Byzantine period part of the gallery in Hagia Sophia was used as an imperial loge, or private enclosure, from which the empress and occasionally the emperor attended the services.

1. Interior showing dome on pendentives, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul, by Anthemius of Tralles and Isidore of Miletus, completed 537.
2. The Virgin Mary and Christ Child between Justinian I (left), holding a model of the Hagia Sophia, and Constantine (right), holding a model of the city of Constantinople. Mosaic from the Hagia Sophia, 9th century.
3. Irene Ducas, detail of a 12th-century mosaic in the Hagia Sophia, Istanbul.
4. Hagia Sophia has been converted back into a mosque, but the veiling of its figural icons is not a Muslim tradition.
5. Built as a Cathedral, Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, Turkey, has also been a mosque and a museum and is now again a working mosque.
6. The temple itself was so richly and artistically decorated that Byzantine Emperor Justinian proclaimed, Solomon, I have outdone thee!



The spandrels of the gallery are faced in inlaid thin slabs (opus sectile), showing patterns and figures of flowers and birds in precisely cut pieces of glistening white marble set against a background of black marble. In later stages, figurative mosaics were added, which were destroyed during the iconoclastic controversy (726-843 AD).

Apart from the mosaics, many figurative decorations were added during the second half of the 9th century: an image of Christ in the central dome; Eastern Orthodox saints, prophets and notable Church Fathers in the tympana below; historical figures connected with this church, such as Patriarch Ignatius; and some scenes from the Gospels in the galleries.

Other notable elements and decorations include the famous Marble Door, the Wishing Column, two huge marble lustration (ritual purification) urns which were brought from Pergamon during the reign of Sultan Murad III in the second century BC, Mahmud I's Library, a number of tombs belonging to Ottoman Sultans and their family members, and the curiously-named Nice Door, which is one of the oldest architectural elements found in the Hagia Sophia, also dating back to the second century BC.

Numerous buttresses have been added throughout the centuries. The flying buttresses to the west of the building, although originally thought to have been constructed by the Crusaders upon their visit to Constantinople, were actually built during the Byzantine era. This shows that the Romans had prior knowledge of flying buttresses. Other buttresses were constructed during Ottoman times and in total, 24 buttresses were added to the building.

Outside the church, four minarets would eventually be added during the Ottoman period, but they were not part of the original church's Byzantine design. These four slender pencil-shaped minarets are more than 200 feet (60 metres) in height, and their thick and massive patterns complete Hagia Sophia's main structure.

Hagia Sophia is considered to be the epitome of Byzantine architecture and its construction is said to have "changed the history of architecture". The present Justinian building was the third church of the same name to occupy the site, as the previous place of worship had been destroyed in the violent Nika riots which took place against the Byzantine Emperor over the course of a week-long revolt in 532 AD.

As the episcopal see of the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, it remained the world's largest cathedral for nearly a thousand years, until Seville Cathedral in Andalusia, Spain was completed in 1520. Beginning with subsequent Byzantine architecture, Hagia Sophia became the paradigmatic Orthodox Church form, and its architectural style was emulated by Ottoman mosques a thousand years later. It has been described as "holding a unique position in the Christian world" and as an architectural and cultural icon of Byzantine and Eastern Orthodox civilisation.

After the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Empire in 1453, it was converted to a mosque by the fearsome Mehmed the Conqueror and became the principal mosque of Istanbul until the 1616 construction of the imperial Sultan Ahmed Mosque, also known as the 'Blue Mosque'.





Upon its conversion, the bells, altar, iconostasis, ambo, and baptistry were removed, while religious iconography, such as the exquisite mosaic depictions of Jesus, Mary, Christian saints and angels were removed or plastered over. Islamic architectural additions included four minarets, a minbar (pulpit) and a mihrab (niche).

The Byzantine architecture of the Hagia Sophia served as inspiration for many other notable religious buildings including the Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki, Panagia Ekatonpiliani, the Şehzade Mosque, the Süleymaniye Mosque, the Rüstem Pasha Mosque and the Kılıç Ali Pasha Complex. The office of patriarchate moved to the Church of the Holy Apostles, which became the city's cathedral.

Hagia Sophia remained a mosque until 1931, when it closed to the public for four years. It was reopened in 1935 when the first Turkish President and founder of the Republic of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, transformed the building into a museum, and it remained Turkey's most visited tourist attraction until 11 March 2020 when the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a public health emergency of international concern with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, in July 2020, the Council of State annulled the 1935 decision to establish the museum, and the Hagia Sophia was once again reclassified as a mosque. The controversial 1935 decree was ruled to be unlawful under

both Ottoman and Turkish law as Hagia Sophia's waqf, endowed by Sultan Mehmed, had designated the site a mosque; proponents of the decision argued the Hagia Sophia was the personal property of the sultan and that the iconic building symbolises the Muslim identity of Turkey.

The decision to designate Hagia Sophia as a mosque proved to be highly controversial and drew condemnation from the Turkish opposition, UNESCO, the World Council of Churches (WCC), the International Association of Byzantine Studies, as well as numerous international leaders.

Notwithstanding this, research, repair and restoration work continues to this day and while the Hagia Sophia has now been rehallowed as a mosque, the place remains open to visitors every day outside of prayer times, except Mondays. This magnificent edifice is still an important site for tourism in Istanbul. It is a place that has been part of the cultural fabric of the city in both ancient and modern times, where every stone tells a wondrous story of its long and tumultuous past. 🌸



# Johannesburg to Seychelles

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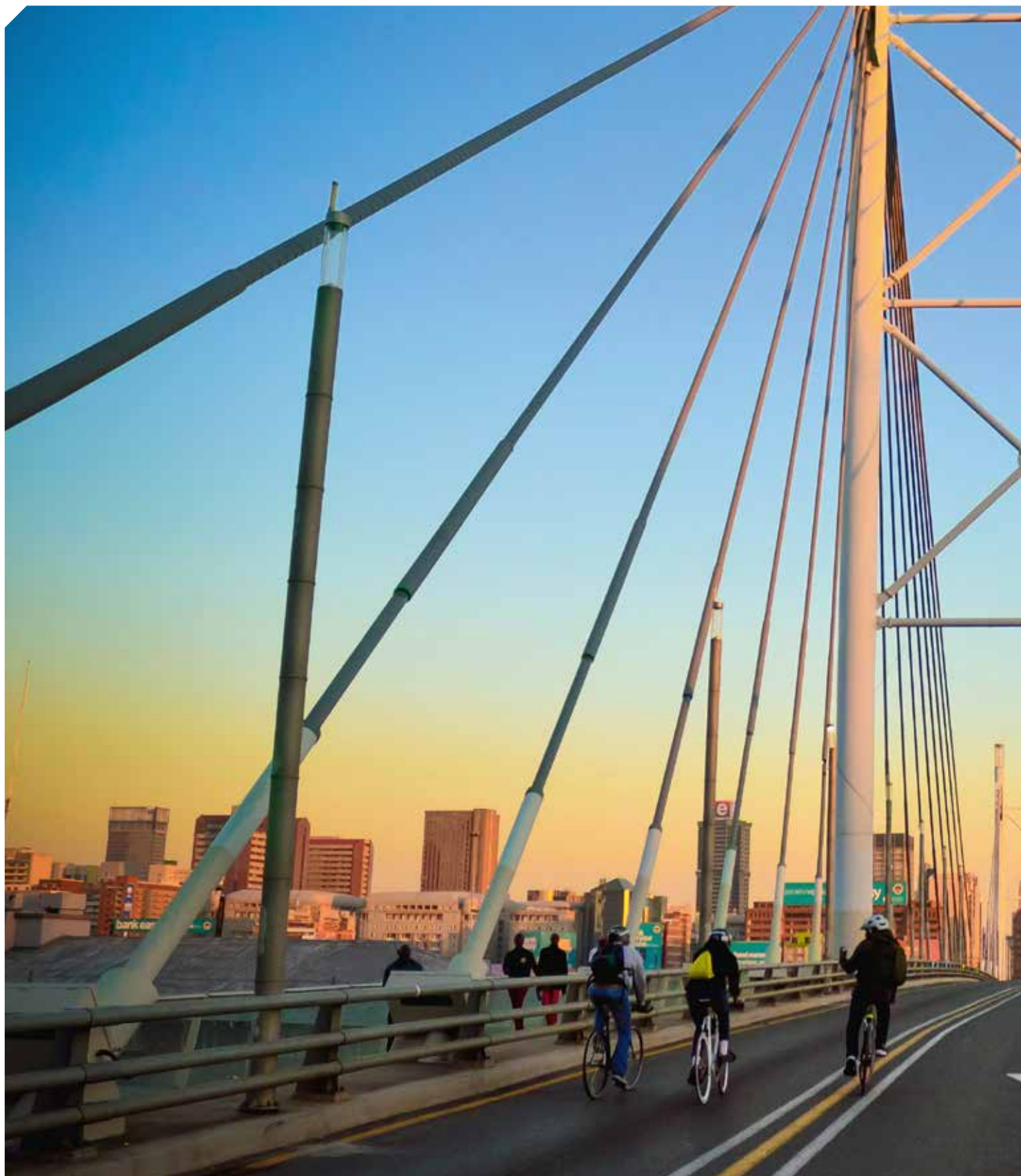
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# Run/ Cycle/ Walk/ Scoot

WORDS: RICHARD HOLMES

It would be easy to simply explore Johannesburg from the air-conditioned comfort of a tour bus, but where's the fun in that? For an authentic immersion into Africa's commercial and cultural capital, you need to step outside, lace up your shoes and hit the streets. It's an urban jungle out there though, so sign up with one of these locally guided tours to truly get to grips with all that eGoli has to offer.





## Run the city

With its heavy traffic and potholed pavements Johannesburg isn't an obvious destination for donning your running shoes and hitting the road. But in the company of experienced local guides, a jog through Jozi can offer an exciting new perspective on the city.

Microadventure Tours have pioneered the notion of snappy urban escapades, and their unusual 'Graffiti and Coffee' running tour adds a new spin to heading out for a session on the street. The tour starts at a boutique coffee shop in Braamfontein, on the outskirts of the original business district (best to travel there by Uber), and traces a five-kilometre route in and around the inner city. Along the way you'll discover some of the city's finest street art – including works by international artists Obeygiant and Herakut – and tap into the area's thriving coffee culture of artisan roasters and skilled baristas. If you can handle the burn, you can even run up some of the tallest historical buildings in the city.







## Scoot along now

If running just feels like too much hard work, hop on two wheels for an e-scooter tour of Johannesburg with Honest Travel Experiences, which was launched to offer an authentic insight into unsung corners of the city.

"I believe I can use tourism as a catalyst for building communities and changing the narrative of this beautiful continent through a fair trade between visitors and communities," explains Francois Leyer, who founded the company with his friend Sanele Tyrese Mhlakaza.

From the street art of downtown to exploring some of the city's oldest suburbs, e-scooter tours allow you to cover more ground than a walking tour, and without the sweaty puff of a running tour.

The scooter experiences run for roughly three hours and take in a choice of locations. If you only have time for one, opt for the route traversing Hillbrow, Berea, Yeoville and Bertrams. These are some of the city's original neighbourhoods, where gentrification projects like Victoria Yards have transformed once-derelict industrial centres into hubs for artists, designers and creative industries.

## Pedal through Soweto

This sprawling suburb on the outskirts of Johannesburg holds a special place in the South African memory thanks to its unique role in the fight against apartheid. It was the scene of deadly protests in the 1976 student uprising, fomented popular opposition to the government and was home to two Nobel Peace Prize winners; former president Nelson Mandela and much-loved Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Today it's a vibrant suburb, and one best explored in the capable hands of a local tour guide. Soweto Bicycle Tours lets you soak up the sights and sounds of the 'South Western Townships' from the saddle of a sturdy mountain bike. Two-hour, four-hour and full-day tours are offered, taking in some of the area's key historical sights. The half-and full-day tours also include a township lunch and a visit to a traditional shebeen, or bar. Tours depart from Lebo's Soweto Backpackers, and there are reduced tour rates for overnight guests.







## Climb an icon

From just about anywhere in Johannesburg it's easy to spot the Ponte City tower that stands proud above the suburb of Hillbrow. When it was built in 1975 its 55 floors of apartments – making it the tallest residential skyscraper in Africa – were sought after by the city's upwardly mobile middle classes who loved the Brutalist architecture and Manhattan allure of this striking cylindrical building. But as the city's fortunes waned the middle classes fled for the suburbs. Ponte fell into disrepair and became a byword for urban decay and the perils of inner-city living. And now the pendulum is beginning to swing, and the passionate guides at Dlala Nje love to show visitors how Ponte isn't all that it seems within this misunderstood icon of the city.

Tours begin on the ground floor, where Dlala Nje operates a vital community centre and after-school programme, largely funded by the revenue from tours. After a brief introduction the guides – many of whom came up through the community outreach programme, and live in Ponte – take guests on a walking tour of the surrounding streets.

At times the urban decay is an assault on the senses, but then you'll round a corner and smile at the colourful and vibrant street scene that shows the rapid gentrification and a suburb on the rise. The guides are excellent at explaining the challenges being faced, and the solutions at play. After an easy hour-long wander you'll descend to admire the very foundations of Ponte, drilled into the bedrock of the city, and crane your neck up at the sunlight falling within the inner core of the building. Then, elevators whisk you up to the 51st floor for a typical local lunch – grilled chicken and maize meal 'pap' – accompanied by a cold local beer, while you marvel at the views out across the city. It's a remarkable way to spend the morning, delving into the rise and fall and (hopeful) rise again of the city, and one of its architectural icons.





### Cycle back to your roots

The 'Cradle of Humankind' on the outskirts of Johannesburg is one of the world's paleontology hotspots. A designated World Heritage Site, it was home to our hominid ancestors for over three million years and has, remarkably, produced nearly half of all the human fossils ever discovered.

There are plentiful coaching tours exploring the key attractions of 'the Cradle', but pedaling your way through this scenic landscape offers a far more immersive way to soak up the grasslands where *Plesianthropus Transvaalensis* once roamed.

In fact, the home of 'Mrs Ples' at the Sterkfontein Caves, where you'll find a state-of-the-art visitor's centre, is one of the highlights of the Microadventures cycle tour of the area. Starting at the Thatch Café you'll cycle an easy three kilometres to the old Kromdraai Gold Mine on Ibis Ridge Farm. This was one of the first mines to spark the gold rush of the 1880s, a discovery that drew fortune-seekers from across the world and led to the foundation of the city. After a guided tour of the mine, it's back in the saddle to say hello to Mrs Ples. Guided tours explain the significance of our ancient ancestors that once lived here, and the remarkable tale of the skeletons unearthed from the site. You'll then pedal your way back to the starting point, situated across the road from the popular Rhino & Lion Park. Guests are welcome to bring their own bikes, but rentals are available for a nominal fee. 🚲



Flight information: [www.airseychelles.com](http://www.airseychelles.com)



# Mumbai

## Furiously energetic



WORDS: TRIPATHY SUGATO

Known as 'the city that never sleeps, Mumbai (erstwhile Bombay) is a smorgasbord of varied experiences. The mesmerising metropolis is a mecca for dreamers, artists, stars, artisans and the ambitious lot. On one hand, it is home to superstars and billionaires with their posh seafront bungalows and swanky imported cars and on the other, it has one of Asia's biggest slums. It is a delightful juxtaposition of contrasts. The striking incongruousness between its sobriquet of being the fashion epicentre of the country and the city's multiple shabby appearances is enigmatic.

Mumbai is not for the pusillanimous. Crowded and choked during peak hours of the day, the city can be intimidating with its crowded appearance. However, the modern city of skyscrapers is more than happy to coexist amicably with some charming historical architecture. Add to it the best nightlife scene in the country with a plethora of pubs, cocktail lounges, fine dining hotspots and chic nightclubs, Mumbai will never stop to surprise you.





## Taj Mahal Palace

Just in front of the Gateway of India, is the magnificent Taj Mahal Palace, probably the most iconic hotel in India. It is one of India's most photographed monuments. The architecture is an amalgamation of Islamic and Renaissance styles. The breathtaking structure is characterised by archways, turrets and domes. The interior is adorned with gorgeous chandeliers along with an eclectic collection of artworks and artefacts.

## Gateway of India

A structure synonymous with India's identity, the imposing monument is a striking remnant of the British Raj. Its iconic stature is for two reasons - It was built to commemorate the royal visit of King George V and Queen Mary in 1911 and it was also the place through which the last of the British troops left India. Standing here and watching the beautiful arched structure with the background of the Arabian Sea is surreal especially when one associates it with its historical significance. Built in Indo-Saracenic style the architecture has major Mughal influence probably to establish the connection between its erstwhile rulers.

## Marine Drive

It's the quintessential hangout place of Mumbai. Built as a structure to reclaim land from the sea during the early 20th century by the British Government, it became the ultimate coastal boulevard of the country with the road curving all along the sea. In the evening, with the street lights in full glow, it resembles as glittering necklace earning it the name "Queen's Necklace". The 4 kilometre stretch is flanked by posh , quaint residential apartments, art centres, old ice cream parlors, pizzerias and a plethora of street vendors.





### **Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus**

It's a train station. It won't seem so from the outside unless someone tells you. It is probably the most monumental Gothic structure in India – a spellbinding blend of Hindu, Islamic and Victorian architectural styles. Built in 1887, it can easily be compared with a castle having several fortifications, domes, spires and beautiful stained glasses fitted across.

### **St. Thomas Cathedral Church**

Another fascinating structure of Mumbai with a beautiful back story is the 300 year old St. Thomas Cathedral Church. Built in 1718, it was considered as the (zero point) city centre of Mumbai. Distances for all roads to the next destination were referred from this point. The towering white monument is located in one of the busiest parts of the city and holds high cultural significance for the Christian community in Mumbai. The interior is filled with art and history. Images and plaques of important Englishmen and servitors of the East India Company. There are also two historical chairs in the front row of the Church where King George V and Queen Mary attended the church service in 1911!





## Global Vipassana Pagoda

Unknown to many in the country, this Pagoda was declared one of the Seven Wonders of Maharashtra by the state tourism department. It's the most prominent Buddhist site in Mumbai with a capacity of 8,000 people. The meditation hall under the humongous dome is an overwhelming 65,000 sq.ft. Vipassana is the oldest form of Buddhist meditation and is practiced in over 60 countries in 160 centres. Located on Gorai Island, it is the world's largest stone dome without supporting pillars. The entire complex is intricately designed and resembles the spectacular temples of Thailand, Malaysia and Myanmar. It is on the outskirts of Mumbai and would take anywhere from two to three hours one way.



## Elephanta Caves

Just an hour's boat ride from Gateway of India, the Elephanta Caves is a UNESCO World Heritage site. The ancient rock-cut caves are situated on two separate hills with some caves being dedicated to the Hindu God (Cave 1-5), Lord Shiva and a few others preached Buddhism (Cave 6-7). However, the main attraction is Cave 1 with several astonishing carvings of Lord Shiva in different postures and poses. A 22 metre high carving is the highlight of Elephanta Caves. What's intriguing is no one knows who built these beautiful rock carvings.





## Mumbai Nightlife

Mumbai unwinds after dark, literally. After a typical frantic day, the city can be seen at its many pubs, cocktail lounges, dance clubs and fine dining restaurants. South Mumbai has some of the best upscale eateries with a view of the Mumbai skyline blending seamlessly into the horizon of the Arabian Sea. If you want to let your hair down there are plenty of dance clubs swaying to the tunes of trance, techno, hip hop and R&B. The art scene in Mumbai is thriving. For the artistically inclined, there are classical concerts, theatre plays and stand up comic shows to choose from. A few notable places are the Royal Opera House, Prithvi Theatre and National Centre for Performing Arts. Those looking for a more authentic experience of the place can hit the night trail of Mumbai's famous street foods like Vada Pau (a bun filled with potato cutlet and special Mumbai spices), Bhel Puri (a combination of puffed rice, spices, onions and chutney), Bombay Sandwich (soft grilled white bread topped with an intense herb chutney, masala spices, cucumber, onion and tomato), Pau Bhaji (spiced semi gravy of mashed vegetables served with bread and butter) and Batata Vada (potato fritter). 🍽️



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# Colombo

## The vibrant and historic capital

WORDS: SILHOUETTE



Nestled on the southwestern coast of Sri Lanka, just south of the Kelani River, Colombo is a bustling and vibrant city that seamlessly blends the country's rich history and modernity. It is a principal port on the Indian Ocean and has one of the largest artificial harbours.

Colombo has a fascinating history that dates back over 2,000 years. The city has been influenced by various cultures and civilisations, including the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, who colonised the island. The colonial legacy is visible in the city's architecture.

The oldest districts of the city, which are nearest the harbour and north of Beira Lake, are known as the Fort and the Pettah. The Fort is still a focal point of government and commercial activity and the Pettah has become a district of small shops, markets and stalls on the sidewalks. The built-up area of Cinnamon Gardens, which is south of Beira Lake, was an important cinnamon-growing region during the Dutch period.

As the commercial and cultural hub of Sri Lanka, Colombo offers a diverse range of attractions.











### Jami Ul-Alfar Mosque

Also known as Sri Lanka's Red Mosque, is one of the architectural wonders of the world. It is located on Second Cross Street in Pettah and is one of the oldest landmark Mosque in Colombo. Constructed in 1908, it is a popular tourist site in the city known for its distinctive red and white patterned façade. The domes are built in the shape of pomegranates and can be seen from the busy markets, shops and bazaars of Pettah.

### Old Parliament Building

Built in the neo-baroque style of architecture, the Old Parliament Building is one of the major attractions of Colombo. The beautiful architecture and the history associated with the building is fascinating. The building was opened on 29 January 1930 by Governor Sir Herbert Stanley. When the State Council of Ceylon was established a year later, the old building was used as the office space for the council. When the Sri Lankan parliament moved out to the new complex, the Old Parliament Building functioned as the home to the Presidential Secretariat. The front garden of the building complex is host to several bronze statues of eminent statesmen.



### The Dutch Hospital

This is considered to be the oldest building in the Colombo Fort area dating back to the Dutch colonial era in Sri Lanka. It is now a heritage building and a shopping and dining precinct. Built as a hospital by the Dutch in 1681, it has been used for several different purposes over the years. The building reflects 17th century Dutch architecture. It has five wings forming two courtyards. It is designed to keep out the heat and humidity and provide a comfortable environment within.





## Viharamahadevi Park

This is a breath of fresh air in a bustling metro since it is the largest, and also the oldest park in Colombo located in Cinnamon Gardens in front of the colonial-era Town Hall. It was built on land donated by a local philanthropist, Henry De Souza, during the British rule of Lanka and was named Victoria Park. Later it was re-named to honour the mother of the ancient and brave King Dutugamunu.

The park features include a huge Buddha statue which replaced the statue of Queen Victoria which originally stood there, and a series of water fountains. It also includes a mini zoo, a children's play area and BAC Jet Provost. The park often serves as a venue for concerts and public events.



## Colombo National Museum

It was built in a truly Italian style and one of the most visited attractions in Colombo, showcases the country's rich cultural heritage through a collection of artefacts. The building is as pretty as it gets and inside are some priceless treasures. You need plenty of time to take in the various centuries in Sri Lankan history. Admire the royal throne of King Wimaladharmasuriya, made in the 17th century.

It also holds collections of significant importance to Sri Lanka, such as the regalia of the Kandyan monarchs. Do not miss the Bodhisattva sandals and various arms and armaments dating back to the colonial era, ancient carvings and statues as well as paintings that show you what the country looked like, in centuries gone by.

## Gangaramaya Temple

The temple's architecture demonstrates an extensive mix of Sri Lankan, Thai, Indian and Chinese architecture. It includes several imposing buildings and is situated not far from the placid waters of Beira Lake on a plot of land that was originally a small hermitage on a piece of marshy land. In addition, a museum, a library, a residential hall, a three storeyed Pirivena, educational halls and an alms hall are also on the premises.

Most notable for tourists is the architecture of Seema Malakaya, a Buddhist temple which was built with donations from a Muslim sponsor with architect, Geoffery Bawa.





### Mount Lavinia

The Governor of Ceylon, Sir Thomas Maitland, fell in love with a local Mestizo dancer named Lovina Aponsuwa and named his residence after her, Mount Lavinia. Today, the stately home is a colonial-style hotel, unsurprisingly named the Mount Lavinia Hotel, is a 275-room hotel recognised as one of the oldest and most famous hotels in the country. The statue of 'Lady' Lavinia, as the girl later became known, can be found in the middle of a water fountain at the entrance of the hotel.

But the beach town of Lavinia is one that calls for long walks on the water's edge, a swim in the ocean, relaxing on a hammock while sipping a cocktail, biting into seafood or the catch of the day. The town has a bustling night life and is also one of the most liberal parts of Sri Lanka as it plays host to the annual Gay Parade.



### Beaches

Colombo's location on the coast offers easy access to some of Sri Lanka's most beautiful beaches – Bentota, Hikkaduwa, Balapitya, Unawatuna, Dalawella, Mirissa, Negombo, Tangalle, Arguam Bay, Passikuda Bay, Kalpitiya and more backed by several hotels and guest houses. Passikuda on the east coast offers some of the safest sea swimming on the island. The east coast is in season from May to September with calm seas and low rainfall.







## Shopping and Dining

Colombo is a shopper's paradise, with a wide range of shopping districts, from high end boutiques to local street markets. One of the most popular shopping districts is the Pettah Market, a chaotic and bustling marketplace that offers everything from clothes and electronics to spices and fresh produce. For a more upscale shopping experience head to the Colombo City Centre, a modern mall that houses international brands and luxury stores.

Colombo is also a foodie's heaven, with a diverse range of cuisines that reflect the city's multicultural heritage. From traditional Sri Lankan dishes like rice and curry to international cuisines like Chinese, Indian and Japanese, there is something for everyone. For an authentic Sri Lankan dining experience try the street food stalls or head to a local restaurant that serves traditional dishes like hoppers, kottu (roti or chapati) and string hoppers.

Trains connect Colombo with other major cities on the island. There are also bus services within the city and to all parts of Sri Lanka. Bandaranaike International Airport is located at Katunayake, and Colombo International Airport, Ratmalana handles domestic flights.

Colombo is a vibrant and dynamic city that offers a diverse range of attractions for travellers, from its rich history and culture to its shopping and dining scene, there is something for everyone. 🇸🇯



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First President's Park



# apple The city

WORDS: SILHOUETTE







Green Bazaar



Amusement Park



Almaty Lake



**A**lmaty, meaning apple father, is Kazakhstan's largest city. It is set in the foothills of the Trans-Ili Alatau mountains. It was the country's capital until 1997 and remains Kazakhstan's trading and cultural hub. Visitors will find plenty to do and see in this welcoming city.

It is surrounded by amazing places from apple orchards to canyons and mountain lakes. The streets are lined with trees and there are numerous cafes, restaurants and small shops to attract visitors as they stroll around the centre. The area between Abay Avenue and the Park of 28 Panfilov Guardsmen is where one will find most of the best cafes and restaurants.

For relaxation, there are many parks in Almaty. The most popular ones are, Park of 28 Panfilov Guardsmen, Park on Astana Square and Central Park.

The most beautiful of all Almaty parks – First President's Park – is a relatively new addition to the city's scenery. The park is known for its colonnade and beautiful flower composition but a good reason to visit the place is the beautiful views afforded of the magnificent mountains in the background.

One of the best and easily reachable viewpoints of Almaty and the surrounding Tian Shan mountains is Kok Tobe Hill, located in the central part of the city. Take the cable car from near the Hotel Kazakhstan and Republic Palace and the scenic ride will take you to the top of Kok Tobe.

On the hill top, you can enjoy the amusement park with attractions such as a Ferris Wheel, and there is even a Beatles monument. To top it off you can have dinner in the lovely restaurant.

The Green Bazaar is the most popular of the city's markets and you can find here a wide range of items, including food, clothing, furniture and other local products. The main hall is divided into sections but the food hall should not be missed. Besides the typical fruits, vegetables, cheese, spices or meat one can also buy products typical of Central Asia, such as kumys (a fermented dairy product made from mare's milk) or horsemeat.

Almaty has a thriving café scene, with new ones springing up all the time. Particular favourites include Café Nedelka, Urban Coffee, Big Apple Coffee Shop or JumpinGoat Cafe, but explore and you may find a gem of your own!

Kazakh cuisine is meat-oriented, particularly with mutton and horsemeat dishes, but all tastes are catered for – including vegetarian.

The Central Mosque in Almaty is located near the Green Bazaar and is a fine example of Islamic architecture. It was opened in 1999, after the old mosque burnt down, and can hold up to 7,000 people.

The beautiful Orthodox Christian Zenkov Cathedral is located in the Park of 28 Panfilov Guardsmen, and is a colourful masterpiece made of wood. Remarkably, it was built with no nails and is the second tallest wooden building in the world, with a height of 56 metres.

There are around 30 museums in the city; the Central State Museum being one of the largest museums in Central Asia. It contains more than 200,000 artefacts of Kazakh history and culture on three floors and is the largest collection of its kind in Kazakhstan.



**Botanical Garden**

Other interesting museums in Almaty include the Musical Instruments of Kazakhstan Museum, Kasteyev Museum of Fine Arts, or Tselling Contemporary Arts Centre.

Almaty's Botanical Garden was established just outside the city in 1932 and today contains local species from Kazakhstan along with plants from Russia, the Caucasus, East Asia, and North America.

If you have the time, a trip to Big Almaty Lake is recommended. It is probably the most spectacular place you can visit near Almaty, being only around 30 kilometres from the city centre, and you can get there by taxi.

The lake is known for its incredible turquoise colour and spectacular scenery. However, it is located around 2,500 metres above sea level and is surrounded by mountains so is best visited during the summer months.

Almaty has plenty to offer from skiing and hiking to spa retreats and museum tours. However, more than anything, it offers the chance to visit a relatively under-explored and untouched area for tourists. 🌿



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# Velana

## International Airport

### Gateway to the Maldives

WORDS: PETER HOLTHUSEN







2

In the 1980's air transport in the Indian Ocean had suffered decades of lack of investment, lack of vision and poor management, leading to decaying infrastructure, outdated technology and declining air traffic, but as the region continues its progress towards development and economic growth, many Indian Ocean island nations

have witnessed a rapid increase in air traffic and the development of many of its major international airports.

This has provided a massive stimulus for investment in airport infrastructure in many parts of the Indian Ocean as national governments recognise the urgent need for essential facilities that meet international standards as

well as handling expected increases in passenger numbers and aircraft orders.

Until the late 1990's, only 2 Indian Ocean island nation airports (Seychelles International Airport on Mahé and Sir Seewoosagar Ramgoolam International Airport in Mauritius) were featured in the top 150 airports in the world in terms of annual passengers

handled, but this is set to change with a massive development programme that will see many of its airports competing on a level playing field with international air transport hubs such as London Heathrow and Dubai International Airport.

This could not be more evident than the recent announcement of a development programme

for the largest of the two international airports in the Maldives, Velana International Airport on Hulhulé in the North Malé Atoll, previously known as Malé Ibrahim Nasir International Airport, which was named in honour of Ibrahim Nasir, the indefatigable Maldivian politician who served as the Prime Minister of the Maldives from 1957



to 1968, and later the second President of the newly-formed independent Republic of Maldives from 1968 to 1978.

The Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL), is currently investing in the biggest project in its history to expand the capacity of Velana International Airport (VIA) from 1.5 million to 7.5 million passengers a year. The billion-dollar project will create a state-of-the-art airport that represents important Maldivian values and culture through its world-class facilities and services. The facilities planned already include a new Code-F runway, the Noovilu Seaplane Terminal and a new VIP service complex for luxury travellers, with future projects which will see the opening of a new international passenger terminal, a new 45 million litre fuel farm, new cargo facility, ramp services, new fire and rescue services building, employee recreation club, and many additional amenities and services to create a seamless travel experience for their guests.

MACL is the leading airport operator in the Maldives with the largest international airports in the country under its management. The establishment of MACL came through the various government departments which had been responsible in the past for the operation of the Hulhulé Airport, which was opened on 12 April 1966. Since then, Hulhulé Airport has undergone various development phases until 11 November 1981, when Malé International Airport (MIA) was officially opened as the first international airport in the archipelago, with the provision of essential services and the original airport office was replaced by Maldives Airports Authority (MAA).

With the rapid growth of MIA, the need for a commercial entity to manage the airport was soon recognised, thus on 1 January 1994, the government detached the MAA establishment as a separate commercial entity rather than part of the government administration, and subsequently, MAA was incorporated into Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL) as a limited liability company effective on 1 August 2000.

As the largest airport operator in the archipelago with over 56 years of experience in the industry, the MACL has invested in designing numerous integrated solutions to create a world-class visitor experience at Velana International Airport – the gateway to the Maldives. Their wide range of services and relationships are designed to cater to the varying and evolving needs of their customers and guests. With a staff base of over 3,500 people, they are the largest employer in the country with over 97 per cent of the workforce comprising Maldivians, and they are proud of an entirely inclusive work environment creating professional development opportunities for people with special needs.

The Vice President of the Maldives, Faisal Naseem officially inaugurated the new Code-F runway and Noovilu Seaplane Terminal at Velana International Airport in a special ceremony held at the airport on 6 October 2022, with the arrival of an Emirates Boeing 777 aircraft from Dubai at 07:15 hours, which was welcomed with a water salute.

Speaking at the ceremony, CEO and Managing Director of Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL), Mahjoob Shujau noted that the new runway was built to cater for the largest passenger aircraft in the







- 1&2. The spacious interior of the new international passenger terminal building.
3. MACL has invested in designing numerous integrated solutions to create a world-class visitor experience at Velana International Airport – the gateway to the Maldives.
4. The new international passenger Terminal at Velana International Airport, Maldives.



world, such as the mighty Airbus A380, and this is the first time in the history of the airport that the runway and parallel taxiway were used together.

The new runway at VIA is 3,400 metres long and 65 metres wide and with the commencement of the new Code-F runway, the number of flights landing and departing from the airport will increase from 8 to 21 per hour. The flight delay will also be resolved by shortening the 10 minutes previously spent on clearing the runway to three minutes, allowing for smoother operations and increased capacity.

In addition to the new runway, the newly inaugurated Noovilu Seaplane Terminal is home to the biggest seaplane operation in the world, connecting Velana International Airport to resorts across the country's 26 atolls.

Also speaking at the ceremony, Chinese Ambassador to the

Maldives, Her Excellency Wang Lixin said that it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to assist with the development of the airport by the Chinese government. She also noted that China's Beijing Urban Construction Group has successfully completed the new runway project, and that the company is also carrying out other development projects at VIA.

The few adventurous travellers who came to the Maldives in the early years of its development were limited to exploring the pristine islands and atolls close to Malé. The natural and untouched beauty of the archipelago started to appeal to an increasing number of inquisitive travellers, and the first resorts opened in 1972, all within easy reach of a boat from Malé, but with so many of its atolls located further afield to the far north and south of the capital, accessibility was a major problem.

The answer to this problem came in 1989, with the launch of Trans Maldivian Airways, who started as a commercial aviation company operating a helicopter fleet under the name of Hummingbird Island Helicopters. However, the destination was still struggling with infrastructure problems relating to the established helicopter air service, and many resorts were still only accessible by boat, but the idea of a faster and more convenient way to travel was about to be floated.

The company was rebranded as Hummingbird Island Airways in 1997, introducing Twin Otter seaplanes to its fleet. By 1999, the fleet had transitioned out of all helicopters and had a seaplane-only line-up. In the year 2000, Hummingbird Island was rebranded as Trans Maldivian Airways (TMA).

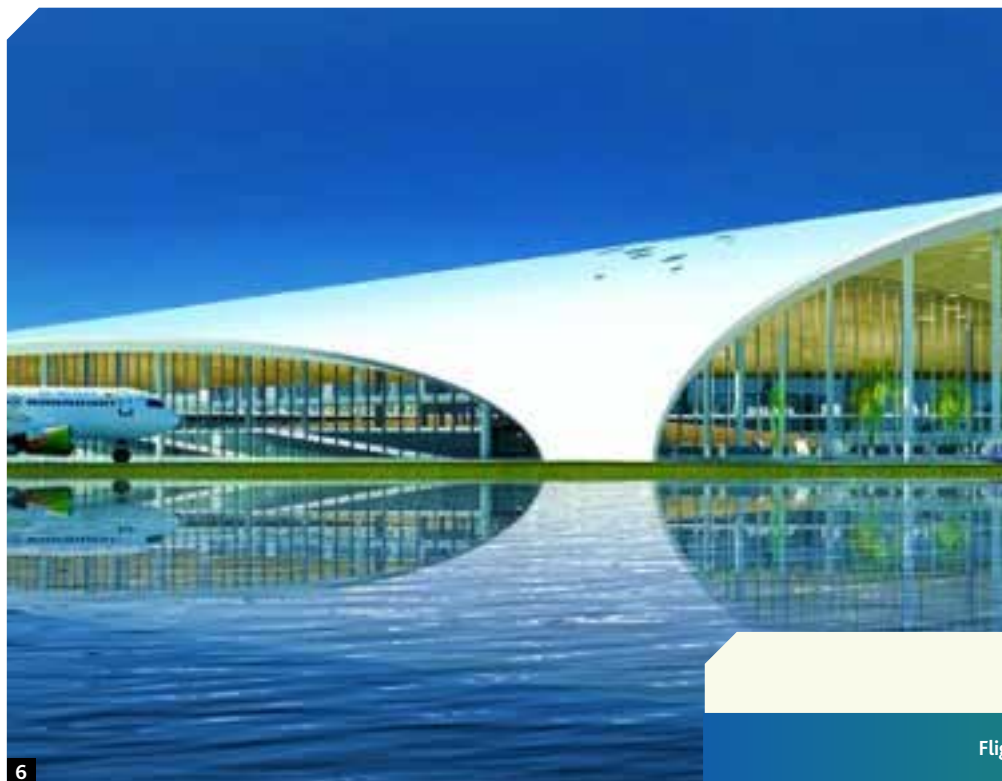
## Noovilu Seaplane Terminal is home to the biggest seaplane operation in the world.

After 30 years of operating seaplanes from its own base, Trans Maldivian Airways is glad to have relocated to a brand new and enhanced seaplane facility at Velana International Airport, which is now a shared facility for multiple seaplane operators, including TMA.

The Noovilu Seaplane Terminal (NSPT) building consists of 4 floors including the ground floor, where the TMA operation related offices are located, while both the shared and private lounges are located between the first and third floors, all under the same roof. The Coral Lounge, TMA's vibrant new VIP/CIP Lounge is located on the 2nd floor of the building at the northwest corner.

The new international passenger terminal building, now under construction, will have an increased area of more than 78,000 square metres and will boast aero boarding bridges, state-of-the-art baggage handling systems and a wide range of food and beverage outlets, numerous Duty Free retail spaces, lounges and other services.

Tourism is expected to grow significantly in the Maldives, with projected passenger numbers of 7.3 million by 2030. These development works will ensure Velana International Airport is ready for the future, offering more efficient operations for airlines and an enhanced experience for passengers. 🇻🇪





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# Inside Air Seychelles

News and information



Inside Air Seychelles

Global offices

Route network

Our fleet

Travel tips



## TRAVEL TRADE FAIRS IN INDIA AND ISRAEL



Air Seychelles together with Tourism Seychelles participated in OTM (Outbound Travel Mart) and SATTE in India and IMTM (International Mediterranean Tourism Market) in Israel in February.

The OTM is the largest and most international gathering of travel trade buyers and professionals in India and across Asia. The annual event was held in the busiest financial city of Mumbai between 2nd and 4th February. SATTE (South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange) which took place in Delhi between 9 -11 February is recognised as Asia's leading travel and tourism exhibition. Conducive to conduct business, share knowledge, and to exchange ideas in order to arrive at solution-driven innovations to accelerate the pace of the growth of the industry.

Both travel fairs in India garnered the attention of more than 50 countries, 1,500 trade visitors and over 1,000 exhibitors and provided the airline the platform to promote its services, products, and best travel options to paradise.

Charles Johnson, Chief Commercial Officer of Air Seychelles said: "India remains a pillar of our regional network, and we are constantly finding ways to stimulate demand on the route. We look forward to increasing flights throughout 2023 as pre-COVID levels return to normal".

Air Seychelles was represented at the OTM and SATTE by Sales Manager Eliza Moise and representatives from its general sales agent based in India, Bird Travels Private Limited.

## AIR SEYCHELLES TO OPERATE ADDITIONAL FLIGHTS DUE TO GROWING DEMAND

In the vibrant city of Tel Aviv, Acting Chief Executive Officer Captain Sandy Benoiton, Chief Commercial Officer Charles Johnson, Sales Manager Crystal Abrams and Sales & Marketing Executive Franchesca Vital represented Air Seychelles at the 29th edition of the IMTM Expo from 14 -15 February.

Dubbed as "a true market place for Mediterranean travel" the IMTM attracted a large scale of visitors and travel trade professionals. The national carrier's presence proved a great opportunity as it was able to establish contacts and remained firm as the airline of choice for travellers in Israel.

During the Passover holidays in April, Air Seychelles shall operate over 26 flights between Seychelles and Tel Aviv carrying over 2,000 Israeli visitors to the island.

Besides the normal twice-weekly commercial flights, additional flights to Seychelles to meet the heavy demand have been added along with charters from Tel Aviv to Mauritius and Maldives.

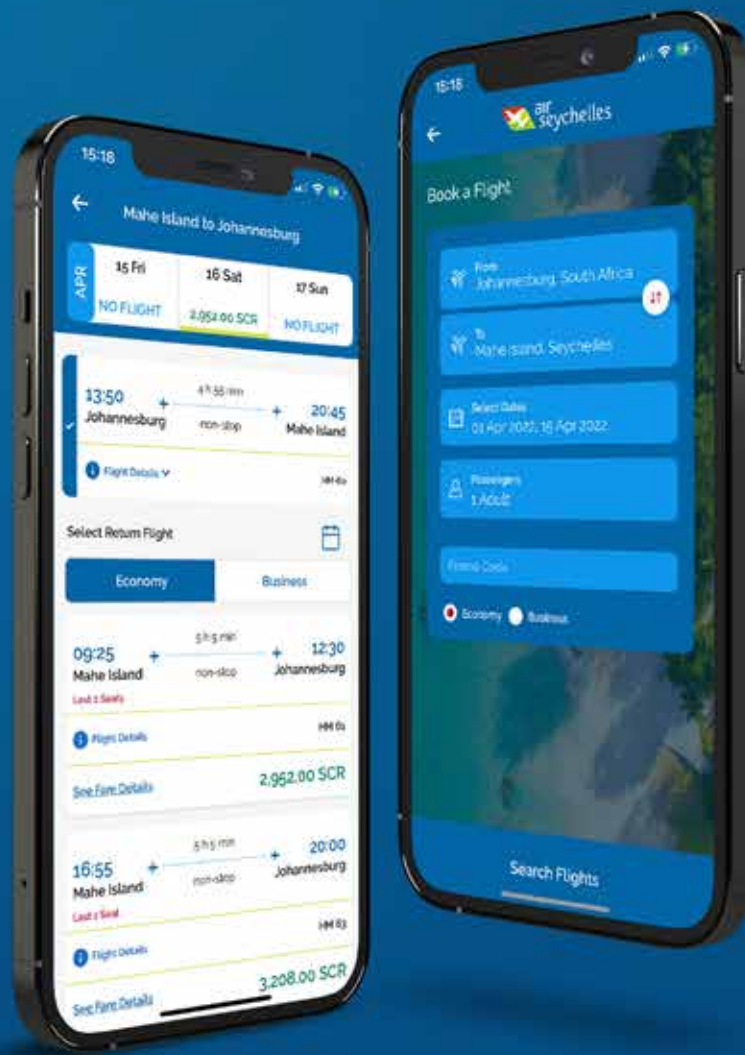
Speaking on the importance of attending such trade fairs, Acting

Chief Executive Officer, Captain Sandy Benoiton commented "it's a great opportunity for us to represent Seychelles in the Israeli marketplace. Israelis now have more destinations to choose from than ever before, and solidifying new contracts and meeting with

existing partners reaps benefits for a whole year. Air Seychelles has firmly become the carrier of choice to the Indian Ocean islands for Israelis, and our intention is to maintain our market share on the route despite growing competition from other carriers".







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# International Network

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



## MAP KEY

- Air Seychelles Flights
- New Air Seychelles Flights
- Air Seychelles Seasonal or Charter route
- Air Seychelles Codeshares

## CODESHARE PARTNER





# Our Fleet

The airline now operates the youngest fleet of A320neo aircraft.

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

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



## Airbus A320-200neo

### Aircraft: 2

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



## Dhc-6 Twin Otter-400 Series

### Aircraft: 5

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

# Domestic Network



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# Air Seychelles global offices

<b>India</b> 	Capital: New Delhi Languages: Hindi, English Currency: Indian Rupee Area: 3,287,590 km <sup>2</sup> Population: 1,263,830,000 Air Seychelles destination: Mumbai	Bird Group Ltd 204, 2nd Floor A Wing Kanakia Wall Street 400093 Mumbai Tel: +91 959 4013686 Email: hmsales@bird.travel hmres@bird.travel
<b>Israel</b> 	Capital: Jerusalem Language: Hebrew Currency: Israel Shekel Area: 20,770 km <sup>2</sup> Population: 9,085,610 Air Seychelles destination: Tel Aviv	AIRLINES GSA 3 Gilboa St Airport City 7019900 Tel Aviv Tel: +972 3 5160598 Email: hm@airlines-gsa.com
<b>Kazakhstan</b> 	Capital: Astana Languages: Kazakh, Russian Currency: Tenge (KZT) Area: 2,724,900 km <sup>2</sup> Population: 19,398,331 Air Seychelles destination: Almaty	Otrar Travel LLP 127/9 Makatayev Str. Almaty, Kazakhstan Tel: +7 727 3302105 Email: Irina.Bunakova@otrar.kz
<b>Maldives</b> 	Capital: Malé Languages: Dhivehi, English Currency: Maldivian rufiyaa Area: 300 km <sup>2</sup> Population: 579,330 Air Seychelles destination: Malé	Universal Travel Services Pvt Ltd 39 Orchid Magu PO Box 2015 Malé 20-02 Republic of Maldives Tel: +960 3332231 Email: Shifa.Faiz@utsmaldives.com
<b>Mauritius</b> 	Capital: Port Louis Languages: French, English, Creole Currency: Rupees Area: 2,040 km <sup>2</sup> Population: 1,243,000 Air Seychelles destination: Port Louis	Rogers Aviation (Mauritius) Ltd The Gardens Bagatelle Office Park Moka, Mauritius Tel: +230 2026697 Email: salim.mohungoo@rogers-aviation.com
<b>Seychelles</b> 	Capital: Victoria Languages: Seychellois Creole, English Currency: Seychelles Rupee Area: 456 km <sup>2</sup> Population: 95,235 Air Seychelles destination: Mahé & Praslin	Air Seychelles Ltd Seychelles International Airport PO Box 386 Mahé Tel: +248 4391000 Email: callcentre@airseychelles.com
<b>South Africa</b> 	Capital: Pretoria Languages: English, Afrikaans (11 official languages) Currency: South African Rand Area: 1,221,037 km <sup>2</sup> Population: 45,919,000 Air Seychelles destination: Johannesburg	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



## 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.

### Public holidays 2023

• New Year Holiday	1 Jan
• Good Friday	2 & 3 Jan
• Easter Sunday	7 April
• Easter Monday	9 April
	10 April

• Labour Day	1 May
• Corpus Christi	8 June
• Constitution Day Holiday	18 June
• National Day	19 June
• Assumption Day	29 June
• All Saints Day	15 Aug
• Immaculate Conception	1 Nov
• Christmas Day	8 Dec
	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](http://www.ics.gov.sc)

### Ground transport

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

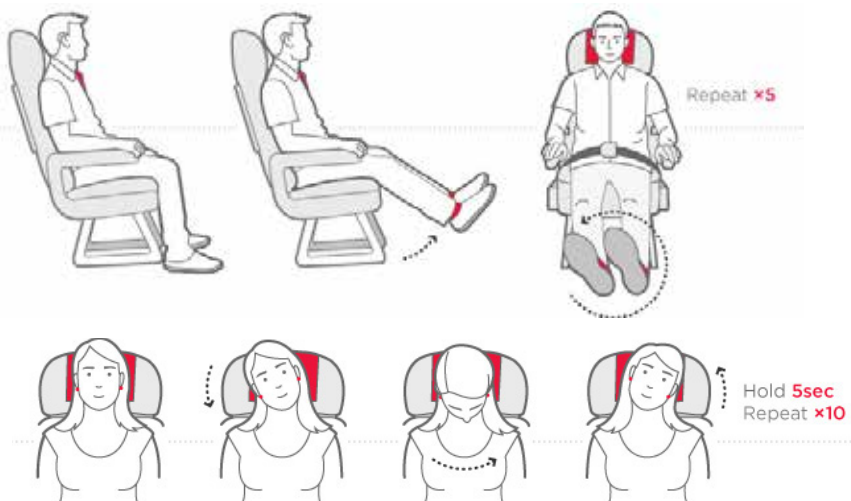
### Taxi service

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

### Tourist information office

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

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



#### Shoulder circles

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

#### Neck rolls

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

#### Sit up straight

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

#### Ankle circles

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

Seychelles is welcoming visitors from across the globe, irrespective of their vaccination status. PCR test is no longer required for visitors to the Seychelles.

Although no visa is required for entry into Seychelles, all visitors must complete the mandatory Seychelles Travel Authorisation (STA) at [seychelles.govtas.com](http://seychelles.govtas.com) prior to arriving at the airport.

The STA document is essential for travel and will be required at check-in counters. Visitors failing to provide the approved STA document will not be allowed to board for Seychelles.

Valid travel and health insurance cover is required for potential COVID-19 related costs. Visitors may be subject to routine health screening on arrival.

Note: All individuals arriving in Seychelles are advised to report any symptoms they develop, that may be associated with COVID-19 to their nearest health centre.

# EXPERIENCE THE BEST OF THE ISLAND

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INFUSED WITH THE  
SPONTANEOUS  
NATURE OF  
OUR PEOPLE



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IN ALL OF US**

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INDIVIDUALS BELOW THE AGE OF 18 YEARS





