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Inflight Magazine for Air Seychelles • July - September 2024

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Dear Guests,

What a pleasure it is to welcome you onboard! I hope you have settled in comfortably and are ready for the journey ahead. With Air Seychelles, you know you are in good hands.

Much has happened recently, and it is a joy to share our news with you. In early May, Air Seychelles was awarded two accolades at the prestigious World Travel Awards, see page 66 for details. We owe this to you as it would not have happened without your votes. Your support and trust in us means more than words can say. On behalf of my whole team allow me to express our most sincere thanks for making this possible for us.

We also expanded our horizons with the signing of a Codeshare Agreement with SriLankan Airlines, refer to page 66. We now offer even more destinations beyond Colombo, making onward connections a breeze.

On 20 June 2024, we celebrated our first anniversary flying the Colombo route; time flies! More on this in the next issue.

To ensure we maintain our standards when it comes to customer service and the onboard products we offer; please take a minute to complete the survey that will be sent to you after your flight. We love to receive your feedback.

To book your next trip, I urge you to visit our website for the latest deals and offers as well as to keep updated on our flight schedules. Don't forget, our Guest Contact Centre team is also available to assist you at our Head Office if you prefer a face to face interaction.

On this note, I will let you enjoy the rest of the content in our in-flight magazine while our award-winning cabin crew takes good care of you. Thank you for choosing to fly with Air Seychelles.



Captain Sandy Benoiton
Chief Executive Officer

“
Expanding
our horizons
”

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Cover image
The distinctive, carved beauty of the granite rocks, La Digue.
Image © Freepik.com

silhouette

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

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



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

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



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🕒 Bastille Day

Date: 14 July 2024

Venue: Providence, Mahé

The best way to celebrate the National Day of France in Seychelles is on a boat cruise by Creole Travel Services from 10am to 5pm. Special lunch with wine and snacks will be provided. Enjoy the little surprises they have in store. Embarkation is at the Creole Jetty at Zone 20 Marina, Providence.



🕒 Feast of the Assumption of Mary

Date: 15 August 2024

Venue: La Digue

The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary is dedicated to La Digue Church and is very popular with Seychelles from all the islands who flock to La Digue Island. In the weeks leading up to the event, houses are spruced up, altars decorated and statues repainted before being transported to the island's church in a procession of 15 days.

During the festival you can also attend various sporting events, cultural activities and parties on the beaches of La Digue.



🕒 Seychelles Maritime Week

Date: 24-26 September 2024

Venue: La Savoy Resort & Spa, Seychelles

This is the biggest maritime transportation event in the Indian Ocean region. This premium conference and exhibition event will promote Seychelles' status as the 'Preferred Regional Maritime Gateway' for the Indian Ocean. The Seychelles Port Authority is hosting this event, which has the official endorsement of the Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA) and the Association of Indian Ocean Islands Ports (APIOI).

The two-day Conference Programme will include 30 world-class speakers who will discuss topics, challenges, solutions, and innovations in port operations, shipping, supply chain, and logistics strategies.

35 international exhibitors and brands will have the opportunity to network directly with decision makers at this major maritime transport event for the Indian Ocean area.



🕒 Seychelles art at the Venice Biennale

Date: 24 April - 24 Nov 2024

Venue: Venice, Italy

The Venice Biennale is now hosting a huge exhibition of contemporary creativity described as the "Olympics of the art world". The latest edition, the 60th since the event's inception in 1895, began on 20 April and will run until 20 November 2024. No less than 87 countries are taking part, with each having a national pavilion in response to the Biennale's general subject, 'Foreigners Everywhere', as proposed by curator Adriano Pedrosa.

Seychelles has been represented at the Venice Biennales since 2015, when eighteen artists flew the culture flag for our small island nation. In 2024, Seychelles is represented by four artists: Jude Ally, Ryan Chetty, Danielle Freakley, and Juliette Zeline (known as JADEZ). For the first time, the Seychelles national pavilion is housed within the Arsenale, one of the event's two main zones, where all four artists are exhibited.

Seychelles main national pavilion is in the Salle d'Armi, Arsenale, floor 1, next to the national pavilion of Ukraine. Once the exhibition is over the works will be shipped to Seychelles in order to be installed at the National Gallery. This will enable all residents and people visiting Seychelles at that time to view the installations.

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☉ Mauritius Marathon

Date: 7 July 2024

Venue: Le Morne, Mauritius

The annual Mauritius Marathon is an incredible challenge held in one of Mauritius' most scenic locations. Participants will travel over the Le Morne and Bel Ombre coastal roads in the south, passing past coastal communities and the island's stunning lagoons. The race's finish line is on the beach at Saint Félix. This event combines athletics and island exploring in a friendly setting.

The Mauritius Marathon, Half-Marathon, and 10 kilometres races are both AIMS and IAAF-certified. The marathon track is 42.2 kilometres long, and participants will enjoy stunning views as well as the UNESCO-protected mountain of Le Morne.



☉ Redhill Arts Festival

Date: 25-28 July 2024

Venue: Redhill Campus, Johannesburg

www.redhillartsfestival.co.za

Jesse Clegg will headline their outdoor music concert, exhibiting his remarkable talent and mesmerising the crowd with his fascinating performances.

Indulge in the enchanting wonderland designed specifically for children, see globally known illusionists perform their magic, and explore the arts and crafts area, which includes activities such as painting, beading, sand art, and more. Wander through our artisanal night market, lighted by lovely fairy lights, and become immersed in the splendour of their art show. Entice your taste buds with the flavours of their organic farmer's market.

RedFest has become the beating heart of the Johannesburg arts community, attracting families, friends, alumni, theatre enthusiasts, schools, and visual and performing arts students alike. This festival promises a magical and exciting day out for all.

☉ Esala Perahera, Colombo

Date: 10-20 August 2024

Venue: Kandy

Esala Perahera (A-suh-luh peh-ruh-ha-ruh) is a magnificent celebration held in Sri Lanka during the *Esala* month. It occurs in August at Kandy and has become a distinct icon of Sri Lanka. It is a Buddhist event with dances and elaborately decorated elephants.

The Kandy *Esala Perahera* (the Sri *Dalada Perahera* procession of Kandy), also known as The Festival of the Tooth, is celebrated every year to pay honour to Buddha's Sacred Tooth Relic, which is housed at the Sri Dalada Maligawa in Kandy. The parade, a unique icon of Sri Lanka, features traditional local dances such as fire dances and whip-dance performances. The event concludes with the ancient Diya-kepeema ritual, a water-cutting ceremony done on the Mahaweli River at Getambe, Kandy.

The Kandy *Esala Perahera* begins with the Kap Situweema or Kappa, in which a consecrated young jackfruit tree is cut and planted on the grounds of each of the four *Devalas* honouring the four guardian gods. Traditionally, it was intended to bless both the King and the people.





☉ Animix 2024

The international Animation, Comics Festival

Date: 6-10 August 2024

Venue: Tel Aviv

The international Animation Comics Caricature Festival is held in August. The festival showcases a fantastic collection of animation films developed by Israeli and international producers. In addition to the movies, there are talks with the creators, workshops, displays, and 'Shukomics' (a Comics market that showcases illustrated Israeli products).

☉ India Independence Day

Date: 15 August 2024

Venue: Red Fort, Delhi

www.knowindia.india.gov.in

Independence Day in India is celebrated with undaunting pride and carries a sense of glory since 1947. The Independence Day of India is also marked as the anniversary date for the partitioning of the sub-continent.

India celebrates this day with great excitement and love for the country. Streets are adorned with tricolour flags and buntings. On the eve of Independence Day, the President of India will address the nation.

The celebration commences with the arrival of the Prime Minister at the Red Fort. After accepting the Guard of Honour, he walks to the podium to address the nation. Synchronised with 21 honorary gun salutes, the Prime Minister hoists the National Flag, followed by a moving rendition of the National Anthem.

This day is celebrated as the National Festival of India.



☉ Milad an-Nabi (Mawlid)

Date: 15-16 September 2024

Venue: Throughout the Island

Milad an-Nabi (Mawlid) is a public holiday in the Maldives. It is a day off for the general public, with schools and most businesses closed to celebrate the birth of Prophet Muhammad. The Prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca, a place in Saudi Arabia that Muslims consider holy.

In the early days of Islam, the commemoration of Muhammad's birth as a holy day was normally done privately, but later there was a rise in the number of visitors to the Mawlid home, which was open for the entire day just for this occasion. This festival dates back to the early days of Islam, when some *Tabi'un* began to arrange sessions in which poetry and melodies made to glorify Muhammad were recited and sung in front of large crowds.

In the Maldives, people gather with their family and friends to create traditional foods and donate to humanitarian causes. While Mawlid al-Nabi is an official holiday, and many businesses are closed, tourists can still stay on private islands.



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Green technology

Green technology, also known as clean technology or environmental technology, refers to the development and application of products, services, and processes that aim to minimise environmental impact and promote sustainability. Several advancements and trends in green technology are expected to emerge in the second quarter of 2024.



Renewable energy: This is rising as innovation drives down costs and begins to deliver on the promise of a cleaner energy future. American solar and wind energy are smashing records and being incorporated into the national electrical system while maintaining reliability.

This means that renewables will gradually replace 'dirty' fossil fuels in the electricity industry, with the added benefit of reducing carbon and other pollutants. However, not all energy sources marketed as 'renewable' are environmentally friendly.

Advocating for renewable energy and using it in your home can help to hasten the transition to a clean energy future. Even if you are not yet able to install solar panels, you may be able to obtain electricity from a renewable energy source. Continued expansion of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, hydroelectric, and geothermal power and innovations in solar panel efficiency, wind turbine design, and energy storage technologies may result in greater adoption and integration into the power grid.

Energy storage: It is the ability to capture energy once and use it later. Storage devices can store energy in a variety of forms (e.g., chemical, kinetic, or thermal) and transform it back into useful forms of energy like as electricity.

Although pumped hydro accounts for practically all present energy storage capacity, and the adoption of battery systems is rising, a variety of storage technologies are now being used.

Batteries, hydrogen fuel cells, and pumped hydro storage are examples of advanced energy storage solutions. Improved energy storage technologies are critical to balancing intermittent renewable energy sources and improving system resilience.



Electric vehicles (EVs): The electric vehicle market is expanding as cheaper EV models are developed, driving range increases, and charging infrastructure is deployed. Battery technology advancements and charging system developments may help to speed EV adoption.

Early electric vehicles appeared in the late 19th century, coinciding with the Second Industrial Revolution, which introduced electrification. Using electricity was one of the preferred methods for motor vehicle propulsion because it provides a level of quietness, comfort, and ease of operation that petrol engine cars could not achieve at the time, but range anxiety caused by the limited energy storage offered by modern battery technologies hampered the widespread adoption of private electric vehicles throughout the 20th century.

Progress in batteries, electric motors, and power electronics has made electric vehicles more practicable than they were in the twentieth century. To minimise tailpipe emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants, as well as the usage of fossil fuels, government incentives are provided in many places to encourage the use of electric cars and trucks.



Smart grids: Smart grid technologies are being implemented to increase energy distribution, efficiency, and the integration of renewable energy sources. Smart metres, grid automation, and demand response systems can all assist minimise energy waste and carbon emissions.

A smart grid is an electrical power distribution system that enables two-way communication between the utility company and its customers. Smart grid technology is supported by digital technologies such as power/current sensors, controls, data centres, and smart metres.

Certain smart grids are smarter than others. Many countries are making major, concerted attempts to convert out model electrical distribution systems into smart grids, but this process is complex and takes years, if not decades.

Energy efficiency: A focus on energy-efficient buildings, appliances, and industrial processes, building automation technologies, LED lighting, sophisticated insulation materials, and efficient HVAC systems all help to reduce energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions.

Simply explained, energy efficiency means using less energy to accomplish the same task, resulting in lower energy costs and less pollution. Many products, residences, and buildings consume more energy than necessary due to inefficiencies and waste. Energy efficiency is one of the simplest ways to reduce energy waste and costs. It is also one of the most cost-effective methods to tackle climate change, clean the air we breathe, help households meet their financial obligations, and assist businesses enhance their profits. Millions of American households and businesses buy or invest in energy-efficient products.

Energy efficiency helps alleviate the stress of paying for energy by lowering monthly energy bills, particularly for households with high energy burdens, which means they spend a bigger percentage of their income on energy expenses than the average household. Installing energy-saving products such as light bulbs, windows, and efficient appliances can help to reduce a household's energy consumption, making energy more affordable. Families experiencing energy instability may be forced to choose between paying their monthly energy bills and eating. Energy efficiency can save households money while also improving the health, comfort, and safety of their family at home.



Green infrastructure: These initiatives include green buildings, sustainable transportation systems, and urban green spaces. Green roofs, permeable pavements, and natural storm water management systems all contribute to reduce urban heat islands and increase climate resilience.

Essentially, green infrastructure filters and absorbs storm water wherever it falls. Green infrastructure features can be integrated into a community at several levels. Examples at the landscape or watershed scale include preserving big open natural spaces, riparian habitats, wetlands, and greening steep hillsides. When green

infrastructure systems are deployed in a town, city, or across a regional watershed, they can produce cleaner air and water while also providing great value for the community with flood protection, diverse habitats, and beautiful green spaces.



Agrotech: It is the development of sustainable agriculture methods to boost food production while reducing the environmental effects. Precision agriculture, vertical farming, and aquaponics systems encourage resource-efficient farming practices while reducing chemical inputs.

The Industrial Revolution marked a watershed moment in agricultural technology, as it introduced agricultural apparatus to mechanise agricultural labour, significantly increasing farm worker productivity. Revolutionary inventions such as the seed drill, mechanised reaper, and steam-powered tractors transformed the farming landscape.

The 20th century saw major advances in agricultural technologies, including the development of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, and new agricultural machinery including mass-produced tractors and agricultural aircraft for aerial application of pesticides. More recent advances have included agricultural plastics, genetically modified crops, improved drip irrigation, integrated pest management, and soilless farming techniques such as hydroponics, aquaponics, and aeroponics.

In the early decades of the 21st century agricultural robots, drones, and driverless tractors are commonly used on farms, while digital agriculture and precision agriculture involve considerable data collection and processing to increase farm efficiency. Precision agriculture covers beekeeping, animal production, and viticulture.

Overall, green technology improvements in second quarter of 2024 are predicted to improve environmental sustainability, minimise climate change impacts, and generate economic possibilities for enterprises and communities that adopt clean and sustainable practices.

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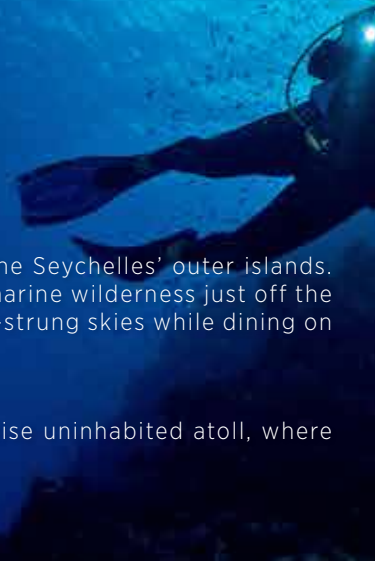
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Tastes of Seychelles

For the newcomer to Seychelles cuisine, there is much to tantalise and tempt the taste buds. JUDITH SKERRETT divulges some of the secrets of these unique Kreol delights.



Those of you visiting Seychelles for the first-time, and who enjoy good food, are in for a rare treat. Those making a return trip have perhaps been lured back by the memory of a barbecued fresh tuna steak eaten on a beach, or a delicate *korosol* sorbet savoured in a candlelit restaurant. Like the famous Russian dolls, Seychelles has many wonderful secrets, hidden inside another, awaiting discovery by the visitor. One of the greatest of these is the fabulous Kreol cuisine.

Taking the abundant riches of the sea and land, weaving fresh ingredients with Indian, European, and African influences, the Seychellois have conjured up a magical culinary repertoire for you to experience. And there are some very special restaurants where you can do just that.

For the first-time visitor to Seychelles, what better introduction to local home cooking than lunch or dinner at Marie-Antoinette restaurant. Perched on the hill overlooking Victoria, the food served here will give you a taste of the many delights in store. As you admire the quaint surroundings of this lovely old house, you will be served (amongst other things) chicken coconut curry, tuna steak, aubergine and parrot fish fritters, grilled fish and a range of salads all delivered with a little dish of fresh chopped chillies (which is not for the faint-hearted!).

In many restaurants, including The Boat House, right on the beach at Beau Vallon, a popular starter is an octopus salad. If you have ever solidly chewed your way through a rubbery octopus, you can forget all past sufferings when you try





the octopus here. It melts on the tongue. How do the Seychellois make their octopus as soft and moist as chicken? There are many traditional methods. One is to boil it with a slice of pawpaw and an old wine cork, another to cook it with sugar and vinegar. Others, more prosaically, swear by the use of the pressure cooker. Whatever the secret, you will love octopus done the Kreol way.

If you are a real fish lover, Perle Noire, also at Beau Vallon, does a beautiful raw fish starter, delicately marinated in lime juice. Their smoked fish salad served with mango, or their creamy smoked fish mousse are both superb. You will also enjoy their sizzling steak with mustard sauce if you've had enough fish.

A fresh side salad is nearly always served with a meal. These are usually simply made from grated white cabbage, tomatoes, onions,

green pepper, cucumber, and carrots, with just a light, tangy dressing of squeezed lime, salt, pepper, and oil. An unusual salad to try is *palmis*, palm heart or millionaire's salad. The name comes about because a whole palm tree must be felled to get at the soft living shoot at the core of the trunk. It is usually served with oil and a squeeze of lime.

You must not leave Seychelles without sampling a genuine local curry. They are spicy, fiery, and delicious, rich with cinnamon, curry leaf, fresh ginger and cardamon. Red meat curries or those made with meaty fish such as tuna are usually quite hot, but chicken, octopus, prawns, and more delicate fish are often made into *kari koko*, which is a milder, made with coconut milk which gives it a delicious creamy, slightly sweet flavour. *Kari koko zourit*, with octopus, is a meal you'll never forget.

If curries are not your style, then try grilled fish Kreol style. This can either be a fillet taken from a very large *bourzwa* (red snapper), or, more usually, the fish, often mackerel or *kordonyen*, (rabbitfish) is served whole and accompanied with a sauce of onions, tomatoes, chillis, ginger, garlic, and oil. The fish is sometimes grilled and wrapped in a banana leaf for extra flavour.

When it comes to serving fish, the Seychellois have many tricks up their sleeves. You can enjoy it in a stew, or as *kat kat*, a dish in which the fish is simmered in coconut milk with banana. You can try a *pwason sale* (dried, salted fish) or even have your red snapper or job in batter with chips! Almost every restaurant will offer fish and chips but the battered fish at Boat House is especially good.

Any creole buffet will offer you a choice of chutneys or *satinis* to go with your meal. These can be made from green mango, green pawpaw (papaya), pumpkin, golden apple (called *frister* locally), or *sousout*. The vegetable is grated, then mixed with onions, lime juice, and often chillis.

An unusual chutney is *satini rekin*. To make this, shark meat is first soaked, then squeezed dry. It is minced with onions, bilimbis, garlic, ginger, chillis, chives, oil, and finally turmeric, which gives it a distinctive sunny yellow colour. With lime juice and a salad this makes a light, unusual and tasty meal.

Meat has not figured largely on the Seychelles menu so far, and with an ocean of fresh fish on the doorstep, it is hardly surprising that the Seychellois mostly prefer fish to meat, though beef, pork and lamb are widely available. You can enjoy these meats in curries or stews. Pork chops are often served Kreol style with the same sauce *rougaille* which accompanies grilled fish. Goat is eaten locally but is rarely served in restaurants.

Another popular meat which does not often find its way onto tourist menus is fruit bat. You will see these huge mammals soaring in the sky at dusk or on cloudy days. It is usually stewed or curried.

Hopefully, you will not be offered the meat of the green turtle, *kitouz*, or young shearwaters, *fouke*. Both species are protected and will have been captured illegally. They have long been a part of the traditional diet, but sadly this has led to their over-exploitation, and the survival of these creatures depends on their protection under law. The collection of the eggs of sooty terns used to pose a threat to the survival of the species, but currently there is a total ban on their collection and consumption due to a fall in the populations in Seychelles.

The staple accompaniment to a local meal is rice, but you may also have a chance to try baked sweet potato or cassava. If you are offered baked breadfruit, perhaps still hot from the barbecue, don't say no; not only is it delicious simply served with butter and salt, but legend has it that if you eat breadfruit here, you are bound to return to Seychelles. This versatile fruit can also be boiled, mashed, or fried to make chips or crisps. It is even served as a dessert, boiled up with coconut milk and sugar. The *banan san zak*, which grows to about 12 inches long and never goes yellow, is used similarly in deserts, or to make crisps. If you try a bag of local crisps and find them surprisingly hard, don't hurry back to the shop to complain – they are made from cassava and are meant to be that way.

To end your meal, what about a refreshing fruit salad of local mango, pawpaw (the reddish ones are the tastiest), banana (over twenty varieties grow here), jamalac, passion fruit, and guava, served perhaps with a swirl of coconut cream, or nougat koko (coconut nougat). The very small local bananas (*banan mille*) are particularly sweet and delicious in a fruit salad. Sorbets and ice creams, made locally from the same fruits, slip down easily after a heavy meal. Look out particularly for the *korosol* (soursop) sorbet mentioned earlier or cinnamon ice cream at Jardin du Roi at Anse Royale.

Only if you are very hungry should you order coconut tart, banana cake, caramel bananas, pumpkin fritters, or *ladob*. *Ladob* is for those with healthy appetites. It is made by simmering *banan san zak*, sweet potato, coco yam, or breadfruit with coconut milk, sugar and a vanilla pod and is extremely filling.



To make the meal complete, there are excellent imported wines widely available, as are a range of beers and lagers perhaps familiar from home. Guinness is brewed here and is a fraction stronger than that which is available elsewhere. Seybrew, Seychelle's own brewery, produces a stronger beer, *Vann Swet* (the Kreol name for the south-east monsoon) in addition to their firm favourites, Seybrew and Eku. Locally made Takamaka Rum comes in a range of flavours and is well worth trying. If you are interested to see how it is distilled, pay them a visit at La Plaine St Andre where there is a wonderful old plantation house to visit and plenty of opportunities to sample the product.

For a more traditional Seychellois drink, try toddy. This is tapped from the living shoot of a palm tree. The sap drips at a rate of up to eight litres (1.7 gallons) a day. It is a harmless, slightly fizzy drink when first collected, but it ferments quickly and becomes a potent alcoholic brew. Other local beverages are *bacca*, made from fermented sugarcane, or *lapure*, brewed from whatever ingredients are available. Both of these are strictly for those with a strong tolerance and do not usually feature on restaurant menus.



If you are not in the mood for alcohol, try a tall glass of freshly squeezed lime, served with a little sugar or salt. Citronelle tea is an infusion of local lemon grass leaves in boiling water, and not only tastes good but is also well known for helping digestion. Tea is grown in the mountains here and makes a distinctive brew. Vanilla tea is very popular.

You are certain to have at least one meal to remember in Seychelles, perhaps in one of the hotels, such as Ephelia at Port Glaud, which has

several restaurants featuring different cuisines, or Pomme Cannelle at Anse aux Pins, where the meals are painstakingly created to reflect the very best of Kreol cuisine.

For more casual dining Rockpool at Glacis has an Italian-based menu but offers a range of well-cooked, tasty dishes. The pizzas here are perhaps more authentic than those found generally in Seychelles. The location is beautiful, set on the rocks overlooking a cove. There is no better place to go to have dinner as the sun sets.

Ocean Beach at Beau Vallon is remarkable for the variety of cuisines available all under one roof, Indian, Chinese and Kreol dishes are on offer alongside pizzas and the old favourite, fish and chips: all very tasty. The Wooden House at Beau Vallon offers, in addition to the standard menu, a wide range of excellent sushi dishes served in a charming venue. The boardwalk on Eden Island overlooks the marina. In a relaxed atmosphere you can enjoy a draught Seybrew and watch the comings and goings of the superyachts moored here. They have a very wide-ranging menu catering to most tastes, with everything from a truly delicious beef curry to a tremendous chicken burger. It is one of the few places which offers the local soup, bouillon bred. Bred is a term applied to all leafy greens, anything from pumpkin leaves to Chinese cabbage. They are open from breakfast until late at night and you can enjoy cocktails, light bites, and toasted sandwiches – something for everyone. Dolce Vita at Mare Anglaise is small but has an amazing menu. They have an excellent breakfast, but you can eat here any time of day. It's best to sit in the little garden to enjoy your pizza, burger, pasta or curry. They also serve outstanding ice creams.

The visitor to Seychelles is fortunate indeed – so many wonderful unusual and exotic dishes to sample and first-class restaurants to try them in, so be adventurous. Your taste buds will be richly rewarded.



- 30ml sunflower oil
- 2 passion fruit
- 15ml fresh lemon juice
- 5gms parsley
- 1 green papaya
- Salt & pepper

Method:

Boil octopus with papaya until soft enough to readily enter the flesh. Allow the octopus to cool down in the boiling liquid.

Remove the octopus's skin and slice. Combine onion, mango, sunflower oil, passion fruit flesh, and lemon. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with parsley before serving.

Recipe

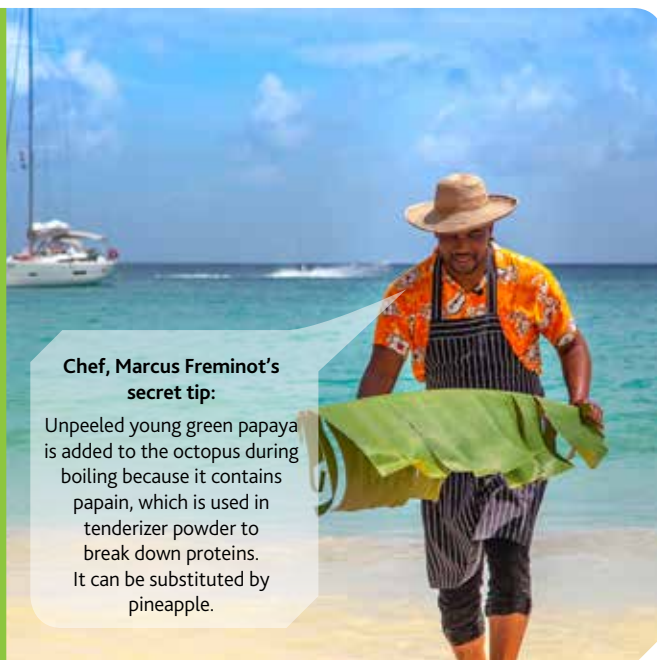
Octopus Salad with mango and Passion fruit

Ingredients:

- 1kg Octopus
- 100gms diced onion
- 200gms diced mango

Chef, Marcus Freminot's secret tip:

Unpeeled young green papaya is added to the octopus during boiling because it contains papain, which is used in tenderizer powder to break down proteins. It can be substituted by pineapple.



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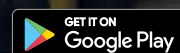
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Peace and tranquillity

WORDS: ZARA KHAN





The Haji Ali Shah Durgah (shrine), which houses a mosque and a Sufi shrine, is the most well-known landmark in Mumbai, India. It was built in the 15th century by Saint Haji Ali Shah Bukhari, a Sufi Saint. In 2020, the monument was listed in the *World Book of Records* as one of the world's most visited shrines.

Haji Ali Shah Bukhari was a wealthy businessman from Bukhara, located in modern-day Uzbekistan. Just before departing for Mecca, he made the decision to give up all of his earthly money and worldly things in order to become a Saint. Later, he explored the world and eventually settled in Mumbai. According to legend, Haji Ali died while on a trip to Mecca, and his body was miraculously washed ashore near where the complex now stands. Every year, hundreds of devotees gather to pay their respects and seek blessings at Haji Ali's shrine.

The complex is located on an islet off the coast of Worli in south Mumbai and is connected to the mainland by a thin causeway, bordered by the Arabian Sea, creating a scenic and serene backdrop. Today, the complex is well-known among people of all faiths who come to seek blessings.

It is believed to be over 550 years old and attracts hundreds of visitors every day, making it a popular tourist site. According to a shrine trustee, the religious location receives 50,000 visitors per day, with up to 100,000 on Fridays, Sundays, and Thursdays.

Muslims gather here for daily prayers, particularly during special occasions such as Ramadhan and Eid. Visitors to the mosque often participate in rituals such as offering prayers, lighting candles, and making offerings at the shrine of Haji Ali Shah Bukhari.

It is an exceptional example of Indo-Islamic architecture, and the shrine houses the Saint's tomb. This majestic shrine, which spans 4,500 square metres and stands 26 metres tall, was made with *Makrana* marble, the same marble used for the Taj Mahal in Delhi. The shrine houses two monuments: a mosque and Haji Ali Shah Bukhari's mausoleum. The mausoleum is completely coated in silver frames and surrounded by eight marble pillars. This notable structural construction incorporates Indo-Islamic and Mughal architectural styles and features.

The tomb of Haji Ali Shah inside the main hall of the complex has a *sanduka*, a type of sarcophagi placed over the original graves of distinguished people in the Turkish-Islamic tradition. The *sanduka* remains covered with green and red brocade sheets. Besides, the marble ceiling of the main hall is decorated with mirror work in kaleidoscopic designs. The 99 names of Allah are also inscribed here.

The main hall of the Haji Ali shrine is surrounded on three sides by three halls: south, west, and east. While the west hall is restricted for ladies, men may pray in the east hall. The marble ceiling of the centre hall is embellished with mirror work and etched with 99 distinct names of Allah. In addition, Quranic phrases are carved on the main hall's walls and ceilings. The mosque also has a three-story sanatorium and is connected to the seashore via a 700-yard promenade. There are no railings on either side of the pathway, so tourists are thrilled when the sea's waves crash against the pathway. At night, the sight of the mosque glows up in the distance, with nothing but the lovely Arabian Sea surrounding it.



The dargah building itself contains a large foyer called Qawwal Khana, where devotees can rest and listen to Sufi musical concerts featuring qawwali (a type of Sufi Islamic devotional singing originating in the Indian subcontinent) performances in honour of Haji Ali Shah, providing some solace. Indeed, the Sufi faith provides worth and purpose to devotees who visit this remarkable shrine.

A mystical history states that Haji Ali Shah once came upon a destitute lady crying on the road holding an empty pot. She had accidentally split her oil on the road and was looking for assistance. The Saint returned to the same area, jabbing his fingers into the ground. The oil oozed from the dirt, and the lady refilled the vessel before thanking the Saint. However, the Saint had a troubling dream that night, believing that his actions had harmed the earth. He was filled with regression and grief, which damaged his health as well. Later, he proceeded to India and arrived at the Mumbai beach. He wanted to remain in Mumbai permanently and raise Islam awareness all over the world.

Another historical fact is that Haji Ali Shah's Mosque is related to the Saint's death. It is reported that he instructed his disciples not to bury

him straight away after his death, but rather to dump the casket into the water and later bury the body in the precise location where it was found. The Saint's devotees did the same, and his coffin was discovered on a mound near Worli. The Haji Ali Masjid and the Saint's tomb were later built on the same site.

The dargah is both a religious and cultural icon in Mumbai. It draws visitors from all walks of life, including tourists, pilgrims, and residents, who come to appreciate the architecture, learn about its history, and feel the spiritual ambiance.

The mosque is accessible via a 500-metre-long causeway that becomes flooded during high tide, providing tourists with a unique and memorable experience. The causeway is lined with businesses selling religious artefacts, food, and souvenirs, which contributes to the lively atmosphere of the surrounding area.

The hours of operation are from 5:30 am to 10:00 pm every day of the year. However, the greatest time to see this lovely mosque is between October and March, when tides are low and easier to approach.

Tourist attractions near Haji Ali shrine, Mumbai

Marine Drive

Marine Drive, also known as Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Road, is regarded as the pride of Mumbai, the city of dreams. This breathtaking spot, 5.2 kilometres from Haji Ali Shah's shrine, is also known as the Queen's Necklace because streetlights along the extensive seashore mimic a necklace of dazzling pearls, producing a virtual image of a necklace. Visit this location to appreciate the natural beauty, capture some gorgeous images, and try some local specialties.

🕒 Siddhi Vinayak Temple

The Siddhi Vinayak Temple, 6.2 kilometres from Haji Ali Mosque, is a well-known sanctuary devoted to Lord Ganesha. The temple includes a simple sanctum with a Shri Ganesha image made from a single piece of black stone. It is stated that the Lord Ganesha statue presents itself and grants followers' wishes.



🕒 Nehru Planetarium

The Nehru Planetarium, part of the Nehru Centre, is well-known for its astronomical and scientific teaching programmes. The Planetarium is a cylindrical structure with a stunning dome. The Nehru Planetarium, located 2.5 kilometres from the Haji Ali Mosque, has various sets that allow visitors to observe astronomical events such as eclipses. So, if you're into science and space, don't miss the Nehru Planetarium in Mumbai.

Chowpatty Beach

One of Mumbai's most popular tourist destinations is around 3.4 kilometres from the Haji Ali Shah Mosque. Watching the spectacular sunsets is an unforgettable experience. You can also participate in other recreational activities such as a camel ride, merry-go-round, Ferris wheel, and pony rides. This popular tourist site in Mumbai is known for its mouth-watering *Bhel-Puri* booths, as well as other delightful options such as *Pav Bhaji*, *Chat*, *Pani Puri*, *Golas*, and *Kulfi*. In addition, you can visit the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Worli Fort, Jehangir Art Gallery, Colaba Causeway, and Gateway of India. The Haji Ali shrine is one of India's most venerated destinations, offering a sense of peace and tranquillity.



Flight information: www.airseychelles.com

Unveiling the city's best-kept secrets

WORDS: PETER THOMAS

A treasure wealth of hidden gems awaits discovery in Colombo's bustling streets and lively neighbourhoods, beyond the well-travelled tourist trails. These off-the-beaten-path attractions, which range from tranquil temples to small eateries nestled away in colonial-era buildings, provide tourists with a look into the city's true heart.

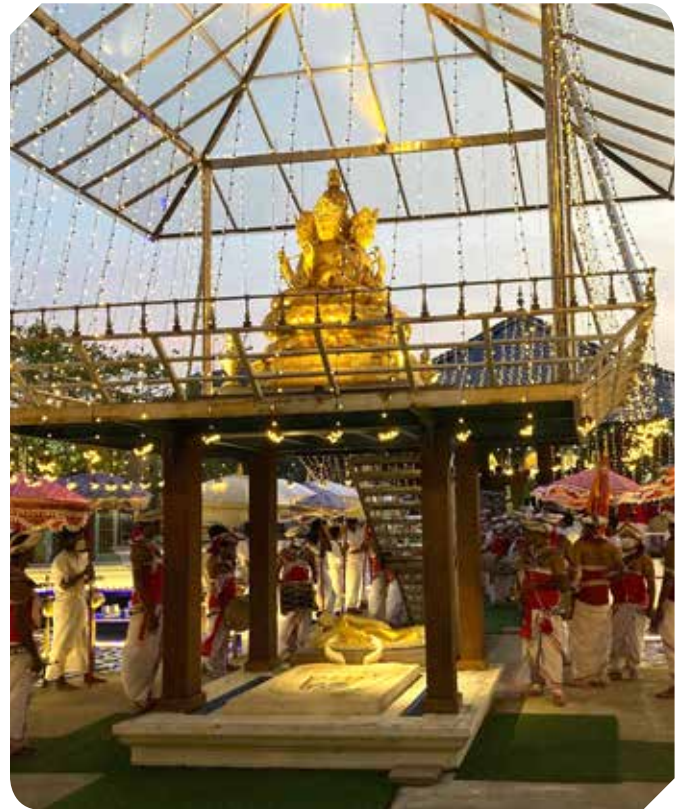


Seema Malaka Temple

The Seema Malaka Temple, located on Beira Lake, is a peaceful refuge amidst Colombo's urban bustle. This floating temple, reached by a wooden bridge, provides a tranquil setting for meditation and contemplation. Seema Malaka, with its stunning architecture and panoramic views of the lake, is a hidden gem admired by locals and treasured by discriminating travellers seeking respite from the city's rush and bustle.

True to Bawa's style, Seema Malakaya features austere open spaces devoid of flamboyant festoons. The temple is constructed on three overwater platforms linked together and to the mainland by pontoon boardwalks. The temple's characteristic blue-tiled roof, formed of collected spindles and bannisters with wooden finishing, symbolises Kandyan architecture, the island's last sovereign state. Each platform has a coral-white enclosure with multiple seated Buddha sculptures on top displaying various 'mudras' (hand gestures).

The temple is mostly used for meditation and rest, rather than for worship. Bawa's design's relaxing white and grey tones make an ideal environment for meditation. The temple's four corners also have temples for Hindu gods such as Shiva and Ganesh. Many residents gather here to worship the Bodhi tree and make offerings to Hindu deities. The Seema Malaka, like all Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka, welcomes people of all religions. No admission fee is required.





Barefoot Gallery and Café

The Barefoot Gallery and Café, nestled away in a lovely courtyard off Galle Road, is a refuge for both art fans and coffee connoisseurs. This unique enterprise, housed in a colonial-era structure decorated with colourful murals and vibrant textiles, displays current Sri Lankan art and handicrafts. Visitors can explore the gallery's carefully curated collections or unwind in the lush courtyard with a cup of freshly brewed Ceylon tea and a slice of handmade cake.

Barefoot Gallery Colombo, formerly known as 'The Colombo Gallery (1967-1971)', was originally situated in a building created by Ulrik Plesner for the Sansoni family in the yard of their own home. It was known for its salon-like atmosphere and informal art exhibitions, where sketches, paintings, and sculptures were displayed and sold.

In 1999, the gallery moved into a new location and changed its name to Barefoot Gallery Colombo to bring all of Barefoot's various operations under one umbrella. It provides a forum for artists, musicians, poets, and filmmakers. It is also utilised for exhibitions by locals and foreign artists and photographers, concerts (including The World Press Photo), poetry readings, film screenings, and theatre. The café on its premises holds private meals and parties at night, as well as Colombo's most popular pub quizzes.





Wolvendaal Church

Wolvendaal Church, a tribute to Colombo's rich colonial heritage, serves as a melancholy reminder of the city's Dutch legacy. This historic church, located in the middle of Pettah, was built in the 18th century and contains outstanding Dutch colonial architecture, such as intricately carved wooden benches and a soaring gable facade. Stepping into Wolvendaal Church is like going back in time, giving tourists a glimpse into Colombo's colonial past and the long-lasting influence of its European inhabitants.

The church was built in Doric style of the time, in the shape of a Greek cross, with walls approximately 1.5 metres thick, made of particularly massive kabok (clay ironstone) with coral and lime plaster. The high roof in the centre of the structure resembles a dome and was originally arched with brick and covered in blue Bangor slate roof tiles crowned by a brazen lion. The church can seat 1,000 people.

Many mural tablets may be found on the Church's walls, and even more are embedded into the exterior walls. The floor is paved with granite flagstones (allegedly imported from Holland) interspersed with etched tombstones of individuals buried within the church or whose bones were transported from the Kasteel Kerk.

Wolvendaal Church is the island's only Dutch church that has been in continuous use, with Sunday services in Tamil, Sinhalese, and English.





Good Market

Escape the tourist crowds and immerse yourself in the lively ambiance of Good Market, Colombo's hidden jewel for sustainable living and local entrepreneurship. Good Market, which takes place weekly at several places throughout the city, features a broad selection of organic vegetables, handmade crafts, and eco-friendly products provided by local farmers and craftsmen. Visitors can sample farm-fresh fruits, purchase handmade souvenirs, or simply enjoy the vibrant atmosphere of this community-focused marketplace.

It is a one-of-a-kind market in Colombo, with the appealing theme of "good for the planet, good for the country, and good for you." The market appeals to the health and eco-conscious, as well as the socially responsible.

A Good Market is held weekly at the Race Course Grounds in Colombo, and they also have a permanent shop on the grounds of Lakpahana, a traditional handicraft store located at 14, Reid Avenue in Colombo.

The local produce at the Good Market is heavily screened to guarantee that all of the produce on sale is organic. Similarly, the social company promotes fair trade and offers a diverse selection of traditional craft products made by local craftsmen. The marketplace takes the form of a lively festival with an array of health food stalls where visitors can sample traditional Sri Lankan food while being entertained by live music. The market also features magicians, live portrait artists, henna tattoo artists and even massage therapists.

Good Market is also the place to find rare products in Sri Lanka such as locally made granola, wax-coated cheeses, organic teas, salted butter caramel, sun-dried tomatoes, macadamia oil, coconut flour, vanilla beans and many more.



Diyatha Uyana

Diyatha Uyana, located on the shores of Diyawanna Lake, is a peaceful recreational park that provides a welcome escape from Colombo's urban bustle. It opened on 15 September 2014, and is located between the Parliament complex and the Diyawanna Oya at the Polduwa crossroads. With its lush greenery, scenic walking trails, and tranquil waterways, this hidden gem is a popular destination for picnics, leisurely strolls, and outdoor activities. Visitors can rent paddle boats, explore the ornamental gardens, or simply unwind amidst the natural beauty of Diyatha Uyana, making it a beloved escape for locals and a delightful discovery for intrepid travellers.

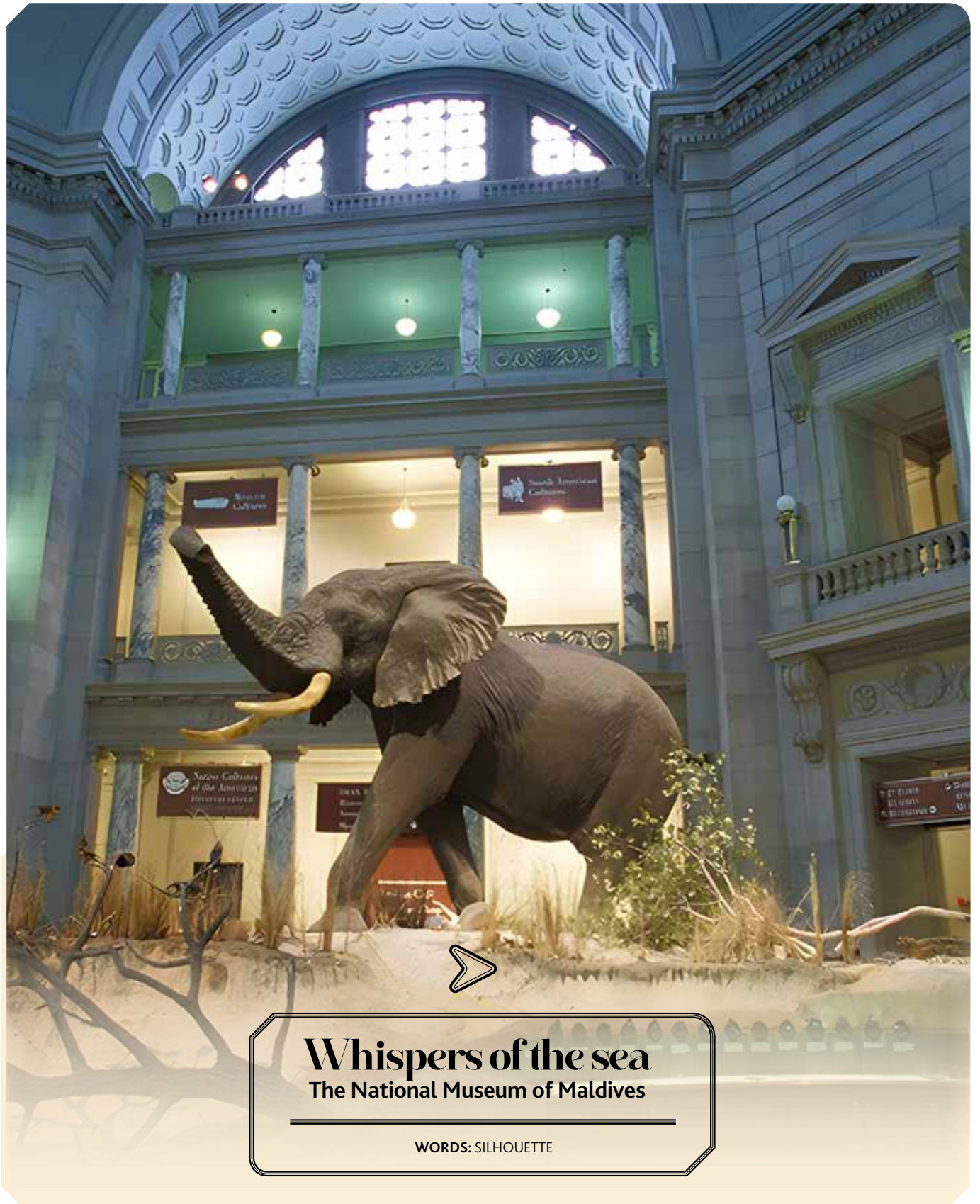
The Water's Edge floating restaurant was opened in December 2014. The construction of the floating restaurant was undertaken under the offshore patrol construction project of the Sri Lanka Navy to a local plan. Today this restaurant is managed by Water Sage Hotel Management. The restaurant can accommodate 36 to 55 people. Night rides are also available enabling tourists to view the city at dusk. The floating restaurant also accommodates individual events.

Peel back the layers of Colombo's past to discover its lesser-known sites and hidden gems, ideal for those seeking unique and unconventional experiences in the city.



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Whispers of the sea

The National Museum of Maldives

WORDS: SILHOUETTE



The National Museum, Malé

The Maldives, once nestled in the azure waters of the Indian Ocean, are now regarded as a jewel in the crown of the world's archipelagos. Beyond its pristine beaches and beautiful coral reefs, there is a rich tapestry of history, culture, and legacy. At the core of this tapestry is the National Museum of Maldives, which houses the country's past, present, and future goals.

The National Museum, located in Malé's capital city, serves as a beacon of cultural enlightenment, bringing tourists into a realm where each artefact on display reveals the mysteries of time. As tourists walk through its doors, they are greeted by the sea's whispers, which echo tales of a civilisation founded on resilience and adaptability.

The Maldives' first National Museum was inaugurated on the country's National Day, 11 November 1952, by the Prime Minister at the time, Mohamed Amin Didi.

The three-story museum (old building) is located in Sultan Park in Malé, which is part of the Maldivian Royal Palace property that dates back to the 17th century. In 1968, a fire destroyed the palace, leaving the *Us-gēkolhu*, a two-storey building structure which is the last remnant of the palace. Some of the earliest and most notable aspects of the interior of this older section of the museum are Qur'anic passages etched as motifs on the structure's walls.

The museum's new building is likewise located in Sultan Park. The Chinese government conceived, erected, and financed the structure, and donated the building to the Maldives on 10 July 2010, however it was officially opened and named The National Museum two weeks later, on Independence Day, 26 July 2010.

The museum, which aims to preserve history and foster patriotism in Maldivians, includes a huge collection of historical artefacts ranging from stone objects to shards of royal antiques from the Buddhist era to the rule of Islamic rulers.

The museum was previously run by the Maldivian Centre for Linguistic and Historical Research. However, on 28 April 2010, President Mohamed Nasheed abolished this institution and transferred its museum responsibilities to the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture, while the Maldives College of Higher Education took over the linguistic and historical research responsibilities.

Unfortunately, during protests against former President Nasheed in 2012, a mob of religious fanatics broke into the museum and destroyed its most valuable items, some 30-year-old Buddhist coral stone carvings from the country's pre-Islamic history, for being 'idols'. Among the damaged items were a six-faced coral statue, an 18-inch (46 cm) tall Buddha figure, and several limestone and coral statues. Other artefacts vandalised include the Bohomala sculptures, monkey statues, and a broken statue portion of the Hindu water god, Makara, while the two five-faced statues recovered from Male' were also damaged – the only existing archaeological evidence showing the existence of a Buddhist era in the Maldives.

The display begins downstairs with galleries devoted to the ancient and medieval periods of Maldivian history. Items on display include weaponry, religious paraphernalia and household wares as well as many impressively carved Arabic- and Thaana-engraved pieces of wood commemorating the conversion of Maldives to Islam in 1153.

While the clothes, coins, jewels, and armour used in ancient times are fascinating, there are several objects that the museum considers to be its pride. The 11th-century Buddha head sculpted from coral stone discovered in Alifu Thoddoo, as well as the 13th-century timber plank uncovered from Hukuru Miskiiy, are both significant. Sultan Ghaazee Mohammed Thakurufaanu-al-Auzam wearing the *Feyli Kolhu*, which is a remarkable example of 16th-century weaving talents. One of the museum's most



The National Art Museum

cherished items is the renowned 11th-century Lindau copper plate, a relic of the Maldives' mediaeval period. The plate, inscribed in Dhivehi script, provides insights into the island's governance and judicial system, as well as a glimpse into ancient Maldivian society.

The museum also holds a record of the world's first underwater cabinet meeting. This historic event, organised by President Nasheed in 2009, aimed to raise awareness about climate change. Other notable relics are the Longman's Beaked Whale bones, which are over six metres long.

As visitors travel through the museum's exhibits, they come across the Maldives' maritime past, a story weaved from decades of naval prowess. Model boats and navigational devices demonstrate the islanders' command of the ocean, illustrating how they travelled long distances to interact with faraway nations and cultures.

However, the museum does not only focus on the past; it also showcases the Maldives' dynamic present culture. Art installations, photography exhibitions, and interactive displays encourage visitors to interact with the Maldives' dynamic present, exploring themes such as environmental conservation, social development, and national identity.

As darkness falls on the Maldives, throwing an ethereal glow over its islands, the National Museum shines as a beacon of illumination, custodian of the Maldives' collective memory. It serves as a reminder that, while the tides may ebb and flow, the spirit of the Maldives lives on, vibrating through the corridors of time and echoing across the vast expanse of the sea.

Admission tickets for the National Museum are available at the entry from 9 am to 4 pm. The National Museum entry fee is MVR 50 (USD 3.00) for adults and MVR 15 (USD 1.00) for children.



The Military Museum



Maldives Science and Technology Museum



Maldives Monetary Authority Museum

Malé is a treasure trove of museums that provide a look into the Maldives' essence. Here are a few more options for those interested in learning about local history and culture.

The National Art Museum

The only art museum in Maldives where you can experience the very simple and primitive artistic atmosphere of Maldives. Next to Sultan Park, the Art Museum houses the National Library, the only local art exhibition hall in Maldives, and is also a cultural exchange centre for countries around the world.

Esjehi Art Gallery

The Esjehi Art Gallery is located in one of Malé's oldest buildings. It's a modern art hotspot that showcases local artists' work. The gallery's classical architecture creates a striking but attractive contrast to the modern work it displays. It's a fantastic site to view the blend of old and new that defines Maldivian culture.

Maldives Military Museum

This museum is a must-see for everyone interested in military history. It's crammed with military equipment, including weapons and uniforms. The museum provides a unique viewpoint on how the military shaped the Maldives.

Maldives Fishermen's Museum

The Fishermen's Museum honours the Maldives' long-standing heritage of fishing. Here, you'll find a remarkable collection of fishing gear, boats, and stories from generations of fishermen. It is a monument to the Maldivians' strong spirit.

Maldives Monetary Authority Museum

The museum illustrates the tale of the country's economic development. From cowry shells to current banknotes, this museum explores the Maldives' financial history. It's a unique method to assess the island nation's economic pulse.



Esjehi Art Gallery

Hukuru Miskiy Museum

Hukuru Miskiy, also known as the Old Friday Mosque, is both a religious and historical site. The museum on its premises houses Islamic artefacts, ancient scriptures, and tombstones depicting the spread of Islam in the Maldives. The beautiful wood carvings and coral stone walls are breathtaking.

Tsunami Photo Museum

The 2004 tsunami had a significant impact on the Maldives. The Tsunami Photo Museum is a sombre memorial of the event, featuring heartbreaking photographs and inspiring stories of resilience. It is a site that exemplifies the human spirit's capacity to overcome and rebuild.

Maldives Science and Technology Museum

This is a must-see for those seeking innovation. It's a playground for the inquiring mind, with interactive exhibits that make science enjoyable and approachable. It's an excellent family destination, with plenty of educational options for both children and adults.

Presidential Palace Museum

Housed within the President's official residence, the Presidential Palace Museum provides insight into Maldivian political history. Although access may be limited, it's worth checking to see if there are any special exhibitions or tours available to see the magnificent halls and official gifts from other nations.

Maldives Culture Centre

The centre is a lively place that honours Maldivian tradition. With live concerts, artisan workshops, and cultural exhibitions, it's a dynamic environment where tradition and creativity collide. It's an immersive experience that allows you to engage with Maldivian culture rather than merely observe it.

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Soul strokes

art and culture of Mauritius

WORDS: TED ROGERS

Step inside Mauritius' vibrant universe, where every brushstroke and drumbeat tells a narrative about tradition, identity, and inventiveness. From the rhythmic swing of Sega dancers to the exquisite creations of Mauritian artisans, join us on a trip through the rich tapestry of art and culture that defines this lovely island country.





The rhythms of Seggae

Begin your exploration with the soulful beats of Seggae, Mauritius' indigenous music and dance. Follow the captivating beat as Seggae performers dance gracefully to the sound of drums, guitars, and traditional instruments, weaving stories of love, sorrow, and survival into movement and song. Dive into Seggae's history, from slavery to its current resurrection as a symbol of Mauritian national pride.

Seggae is a popular music genre in Mauritius and Réunion. It is a complete performance art that combines music, storytelling, and traditional dance. Musically, the most current forms common in Mauritius are its fusion genre Séggae and Bhojpuri variations, whilst in Réunion, maloya has been added, the latter being considerably closer to the older, typical music influences originating in Madagascar. Mauritius' indigenous population is multi-ethnic, reflecting the multiplicity of seggae types.

Mauritian Creole or Réunionese Creole. Previously, Seggae music concentrated on traditional percussion instruments like the ravanne and the triangle, and it was sung to protest inequities in Mauritian society; this version of Seggae is known as Santé engagé.

The ancient form of the music was mostly spontaneous and profoundly emotional, reflecting the struggles of a subjugated, first enslaved people. It is predominantly dance music, but it has also been utilised for dirges and traditional exorcisms.



☉ Colours of Creole cuisine

Explore the flavours and smells of Mauritian cuisine, which combines elements from Indian, Chinese, African, and European culinary traditions. However, over time, Mauritians began to develop their own cuisine through culinary hybridisation. The Indian influence is most seen in the extensive use of spices, which are necessary ingredients in most cuisines.

Mauritian cuisine is also distinguished by its use of locally sourced ingredients. All of this adds up to an intriguing gourmet journey for guests looking to experience a little bit of everything. A Mauritian cook admits to keeping 40 spices on hand to assist seasoning dishes, but the only really needed ingredient for a proper Mauritian curry is the crushed fresh leaf of the *carri poule*, which grows abundantly on the island.

Join local chefs and food fans as they tour lively markets, roadside stalls, and fine dining restaurants, sampling specialties like as *dholl puri*, *gateau piment*, and *rougaille*, which reflect the island's unique cultural history. Savour each exquisite bite while feeling the delight of group eating and the warmth of Mauritian hospitality.



☉ Craftsmanship and tradition

Discover the beauty and craftsmanship of Mauritian craftsmen, whose exquisite designs and talented hands give new life to traditional crafts passed down through centuries. Explore the workshops and studios where craftsmen create stunning textiles, pottery, wood sculptures, and jewellery, each one a monument to the island's rich cultural legacy and natural beauty. Meet the artists behind amazing pieces of art, and learn about the techniques and traditions that inspire them.

The most well-known Mauritian artists, Chazal and Herve Masson, have died. And, like the dodo, Chazal looks to be more well-known than any contemporary artist. His naive portrayals of flowers, birds, and fish are much sought for and fetch higher prices than other Mauritian painters' works.

Aside from art, the galleries carry a variety of local handicrafts, including steel wall hangings and wooden bookends. These vibrant creations, along with model ships, are among the most visible local handicrafts.

It is impossible to visit Mauritius without seeing the island's famous miniature ships. Unsurprisingly, the boats are among the most popular souvenirs purchased by travellers. Since 1968, the model shipbuilding business has grown significantly, with over 100 manufacturers of various sizes creating boats of variable quality.

Museums and galleries

Immerse yourself in Mauritius' lively arts scene by visiting museums, galleries, and cultural organisations that showcase the island's many artistic expressions. Wander through exhibits of contemporary and traditional artwork by Mauritian and foreign artists, learning about the social, political, and cultural themes that form Mauritian identity. From the vivid street art of Port Louis to the beautiful statues of Le Morne, explore Mauritius' artistic environment.

You can visit the following museums:

The Blue Penny Museum is located on the Caudan Waterfront in Port Louis. The museum includes a rare collection of artefacts, papers, and artworks that reflect the island's rich background.

The Natural History Museum is the oldest in Mauritius and one of the oldest in southern Africa. Of the original four galleries, only three remain. The first gallery showcases avian species, the second gallery focuses on marine species, and the third section features displays on the extinct Mauritian bird known as the Dodo.

The Mauritius Postal Museum is housed in an old stone structure from the 18th century, beside the motorway in Port-Louis. It houses relics connected to Mauritius' postal history, including the renowned red and blue penny stamps.

The Mikado Shell Museum is located on Sir William Newton Road in Port Louis, Mauritius's capital. It houses about 3000 seashells, including ones from Mauritius.

The famed Mauritian bird became extinct during the Dutch rule of the island.

The Chateau Labourdonnais was an ancient colonial chateau situated on an old sugar estate near the commune of Mapou, in the Rivière du Rampart area. It is a testament to Mauritius' colonial past till independence.

Maison Eureka is a Creole colonial house in the Moka area that has been converted into an antique furniture and object museum, complete with ancient pictures, chinaware, books, rugs, and other items. The building dates from the nineteenth century.

The Mahébourg National History Museum is located in the south-east of the island, on the bank of Rivière La Chaux, in a historic French colonial country house established in 1772. It houses a collection of varied materials linked to the history of the island of Mauritius such as antique papers, prints, paintings, maps, and small sculptures.

The Robert Edward Hart Memorial Museum, located in the southern hamlet of Souillac, is housed in La Nef, a coral cottage. The museum exhibits a collection of things that originally belonged to Mauritius poet Robert Edward Hart, born in 1891 and died in 1954.



The Blue Penny Museum



The Natural History Museum



The Robert Edward Hart Memorial Museum



Festivals and celebrations

Experience the excitement and vitality of Mauritian festivals and festivities, where music, dancing, and cultural traditions are brought to life through spectacular displays of colour and energy. Join the Cavadee celebration, where devotees pierce their bodies with needles to worship Lord Murugan or dance the night away at the Maha Shivaratree, a Hindu festival commemorating the god Shiva. The Cavadee is decorated with flowers and a pitcher of milk. The arc is set out in the temple at the foot of a divine deity. The celebration also includes fire-walking and sword-climbing ceremonies, which are rather stunning.

Mauritius' multicultural calendar is jam-packed with opportunities to celebrate diversity and harmony, from Chinese New Year parades including dancing dragons, lions, and a firework display to Eid al-Fitr. The primary colour for Chinese New Year is red, which represents pleasure. The primary celebrations are placed on that day at Port Louis, Chinatown, with Chinese Dragons, lion dances, and fireworks. The climbing rituals are extremely impressive.

One thing is plainly clear: this island paradise is more than just a destination; it's a celebration of creativity, heritage, and community. Whether via music and dance, cuisine and handicraft, or festivals and festivities, Mauritius welcomes visitors to immerse themselves in the beauty and vitality of its cultural fabric, forming connections that cross language and borders. Allow your spirit to soar on the wings of song and dance as you discover Mauritius' rich rhythms, where art and culture are intertwined with everyday life.



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Urban adventure playground

WORDS: MAMBO GICHUKI

In the heart of South Africa is a city brimming with energy, where urban exploration meets exhilarating adventures at every turn. Welcome to Johannesburg, a city that defies expectations and welcomes you to take an adventurous journey through its different landscapes and adrenaline-fueled attractions.



The sky's the limit

Begin your adventure high above the city streets, where thrill-seekers and daredevils come together to discover Johannesburg from a completely new perspective. From the renowned Orlando Towers, once emblems of the industry but now transformed into a playground for bungee jumping and base-jumping aficionados, to the dizzying heights of the Randlords rooftop bar, where panoramic views of the city take your breath away, Johannesburg has a skyline unlike any other.

The Orlando Towers bungee in Soweto provides a new dimension to touring. Choose from a variety of thrills offered by the Soweto towers, including a 100-metre plunge to the earth, bungee jumping, swinging, or free-falling your way to the bottom. This is undoubtedly one of the most interesting ways to experience one of South Africa's largest and most well-known townships. Outdoor adventure activities centred around the Orlando Towers, which are part of the historic Orlando Power Station and a prominent Soweto tourist attraction, are rapidly transforming the way visitors experience this already dynamic city.

Once you're strapped into your harness, an open-air lift takes you along the outside of the tower to a platform three metres from the top. A fast stroll down the floating staircase leads to the tower's rim and either the skybridge (connecting the two towers) for the bungee jump or the swing platform. The Soweto Bungee Jump drops you 33 stories, while the Power Swing allows you to freefall for 40 metres before the swing cables kick in. The ominously titled Abyss, another world-first, is identical to the Power Swing but involves jumping into the tower and swinging over its base. There is also a viewing platform for those who are a little less courageous.

But the adventure does not end there. Johannesburg's urban sprawl gives way to enormous green landscapes and wildlife reserves waiting to be discovered. Discover hidden jewels such as the Walter Sisulu National Botanical Garden, which is a natural sanctuary within the urban jungle with gushing waterfalls and towering cliffs. For those looking for a more thorough adventure, the Klipriviersberg Nature Reserve, located just a short distance from the city core, provides hiking paths and wildlife encounters.





Street of Maboneng



Newtown Cultural Precinct



Workers Museum

Cultural enclaves

Johannesburg's varied neighbourhoods and cultural pockets provide limitless options for urban adventurers looking for new discoveries. Dive into the lively streets of Maboneng, where street art covers every corner and hip cafes and art galleries entice you to stay around. Alternatively, immerse yourself in the vivid sights and sounds of the Newtown Cultural Precinct, where history and creativity converge in a flurry of music, dance, and street performances. Hop on the Red Bus to visit the Newtown Precinct with City Sightseeing, the safest way to see Johannesburg.

The Sci-Bono Centre is the first stop, and it's an engaging, enjoyable science centre for both kids and adults. It is a world-class science centre that contributes to growing South Africa's science, engineering, and technology capabilities. It has over 400 interactive exhibits to see. Sci-Bono is a Non-Profit organisation founded by varying science institutes and the Gauteng Department of Education.

The next stop is Museum Africa located in the heart of the Newtown Cultural Precinct. This enormous edifice, which was previously a fruit and vegetable market in 1913, now holds a significant collection of photographic history and equipment, transporting you back in time to the earliest cameras. The museum also houses other ancient treasures, such as Victorian carriages and African tribal masks. Take a tour through Africa's history to the golden days when the first nations dominated. From the days of Kemet (now Egypt), Kush (Sudan), and Punt (Somalia). Here you will gain a unique understanding of ancient African cultures due to the extensive collection of rock art and African antiquities.

Move on to the Workers Museum, joined Museum Africa to learn about migration history. The Newtown Precinct was originally home to factories, warehouses, and the Power Station, which is now the famed Turbine Hall. The district was home to a diverse group of workers from all races. However, their housing was in stark contrast to one another. The power station labourers were segregated by colour, while white skilled personnel lived in residents the non-white workers lived in hostels. These power station buildings and hostels are still on exhibit today, serving as a reminder of history. It's sobering to walk into the rooms and restrooms where these men formerly resided, struggling to feed their distant families.

Also visit the area's numerous clubs and restaurants, as well as the famed Market Theatre, which is housed in an antique Victorian structure and hosts worldwide and nationally recognised artistic acts. The region is colourful, active, and full of opportunities.



Market Theatre

Thrills and spills

But perhaps you want something more exciting? Test your limits on the city's mountain bike routes, where challenging terrain and spectacular views make every ride an adventure. Alternatively, hit the rapids of the Vaal River for an adrenaline-fueled white-water rafting adventure you won't soon forget. For something more exciting, the Cradle of Humankind provides hot air balloon rides over ancient landscapes, allowing you to soar above the treetops and experience the wonders of the planet below.

Explore the most popular hiking and mountain biking trails near Johannesburg using trail maps and driving directions, as well as thorough reviews and images from hikers, campers, and nature enthusiasts:

Delta Park via Braamfontein Spruit Trail

Try the 8.9-kilometre circular path near Johannesburg, Gauteng. It takes an average of 2 hours and 25 minutes to complete. This is a popular region for mountain biking, running, and walking, so you're likely to meet other people while exploring.

Thaba Orange trail

Enjoy the 21.1-kilometre circular route. It takes an average of 5 hours and 19 minutes to accomplish this trip, which is widely regarded as difficult. Enjoy the 21.1-kilometre circular route. It takes an average of 5 hours and 19 minutes to accomplish this trip, which is widely regarded as difficult.

PwC Bike Park

Learn about the 3.5-kilometre circular route, generally regarded as a reasonably hard course. The best months to visit this trail are May to July.

Saint's MTB

Explore the 5.6-kilometre circular route seen as an easy route. This is a popular mountain bike track. The optimum months to visit this trail are June to July.

Walter Sisulu trail

Set out on this 3.1-kilometre out-and-back track which takes an average of 1 hour and 8 minutes to accomplish this fairly tough route. This is a popular destination, so you'll most certainly run into other people while exploring.

Saints Mini Loop

Explore this 1.8-kilometre circular route. It takes about 30 minutes to complete and is generally regarded as a moderately hard path.

Thaba Service Track Trail

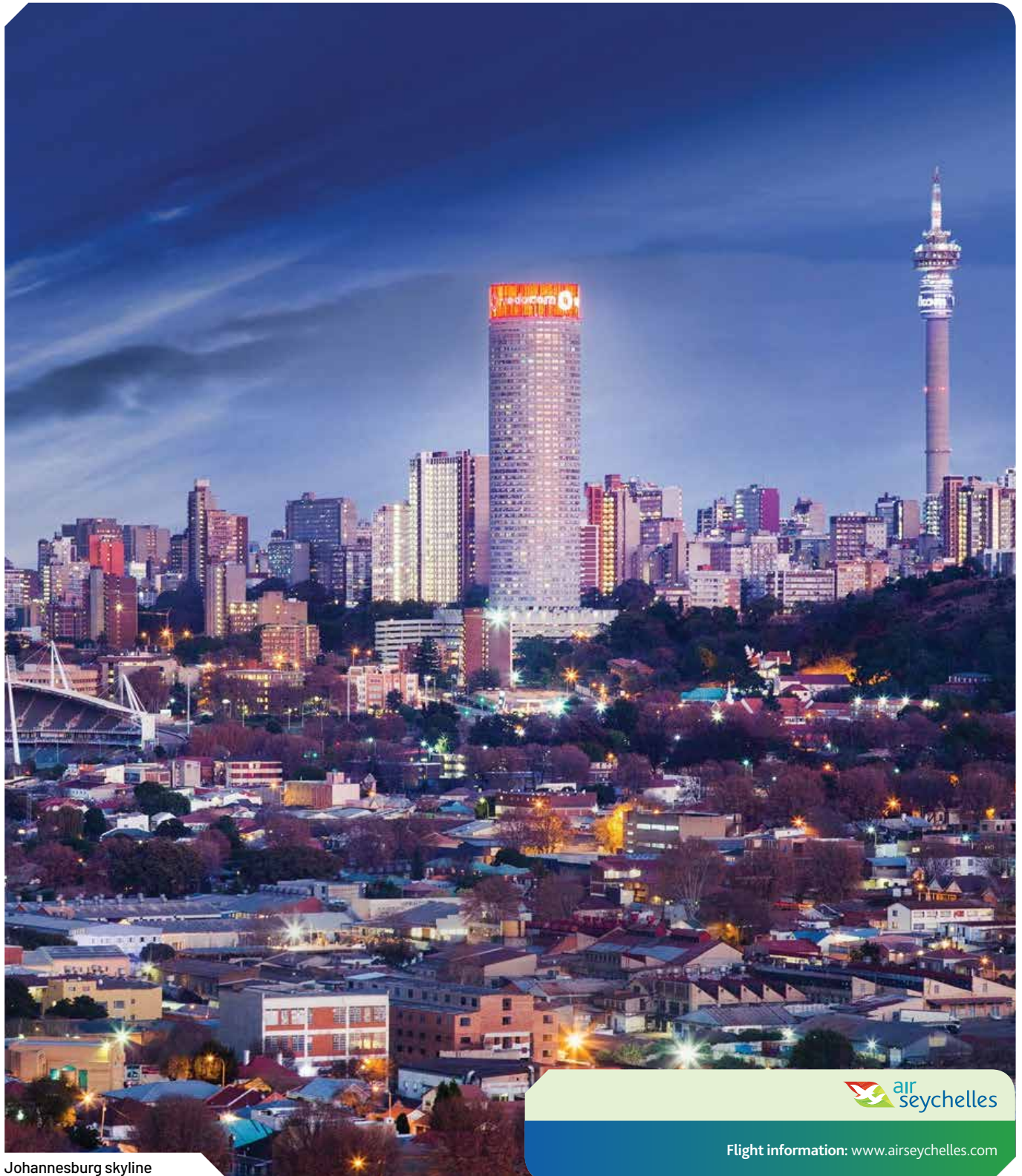
Check out this 7.7-kilometre out-and-back track. It takes an average of 1 hour and 59 minutes to finish this fairly tough route.

Jukskei River MTB

Set out on this 25.7-kilometre circular track is considered a difficult route. Dogs are welcome, but they must be on a leash.



Johannesburg is an urban adventure playground unlike any other. From the heights of its skyscrapers to the depths of its natural wonders, Johannesburg urges you to test the limits of what is possible and embrace the thrill of the unknown. So, whether you're a seasoned thrill-seeker or just want to let out your inner adventurer, Johannesburg has something for everyone. Try this trip and discover why this city is truly a playground for dreamers.



Johannesburg skyline



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A unique natural wonder: The Dead Sea

WORDS: MAMBO GICHUKI



Landscape view of the Dead Sea

A few days at the Dead Sea provides the perfect balance of leisure, adventure, and cultural exploration, making it an ideal destination for visitors looking for a really unique and restorative experience.

The Dead Sea, located between Israel and Jordan, is a unique natural wonder that attracts travellers from all over the world for a variety of reasons. The Dead Sea is only 87 kilometres from Tel Aviv, and there is a shuttle service between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. It runs daily throughout the week and is the cheapest method to get to the water. The Dead Sea Day Trip departs daily and provides you with a full day at the beach!

The Dead Sea (actually a lake) is one of the saltiest bodies of water on the planet, with salinity levels ranging from 30% to 35%. This high salinity makes it practically hard for organisms to flourish, thus the name. As the climate got more arid, Lake Lisan shrunk and became saltier, leaving just the Dead Sea as its sole remnant. During floods, the Dead Sea's salt content can drop from 35% to 30% or below. The Dead Sea comes to life after a rainy winter.

Following a particularly rainy winter in 1980, the normally dark blue Dead Sea turned red. Researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem discovered the Dead Sea to be swarming with an alga called *Dunaliella*, whose bacterial presence caused the hue to alter. Since 1980, the Dead Sea basin has been dry, and algae and bacteria haven't returned in significant numbers.

The region's climate may also provide health benefits. The Dead Sea area has long, warm summers and pleasant winters, making it a popular vacation year-round. The bromide-rich atmosphere filters harmful UV rays, essentially acting as a natural sunscreen for sunbathers. The buoyancy of the water allows guests to float effortlessly on the surface, creating a one-of-a-kind and peaceful experience.

This salt lake's distinguishing features go far beyond its salinity. It is also the Earth's lowest point, at more than 400 metres below sea level. Furthermore, the Dead Sea is well-known for its mineral-rich mud,



which has been recognised for its medicinal powers and is utilised in skincare products all over the world.

For millennia, the mineral-rich waters and mud of the Dead Sea have been known for their healing powers. It is commonly known that sea salt contains minerals, but the Dead Sea water's specific makeup appears to make its salt more effective. Silicon dioxide, calcium oxide, aluminium oxide, magnesium oxide, iron (III) oxide, sodium oxide, potassium oxide, titanium (IV) oxide, sulphur trioxide, phosphorous pentoxide, chloride, and bromide are some of the most prominent minerals found in Dead Sea mud.

Water and mud are said to provide healing properties for a variety of skin diseases, including psoriasis, eczema, and acne. Many people travel to the Dead Sea expressly for its revitalising and healing properties. It was one of the world's first health resorts and has supplied a wide range of products, including asphalt for Egyptian mummification and potash for fertilisers. Today, tourists visit the sea along its Israeli, Jordanian, and West Bank shores.

It is reported that Queen Cleopatra was granted exclusive rights to develop cosmetic and pharmaceutical facilities in the area. The Dead Sea's salinity and mineral content enhance cell metabolism and aid in its healing and regeneration. Dead Sea Salt also works as a disinfectant, eliminating toxic elements from the skin.

The Dead Sea is surrounded by spectacular desert landscapes, craggy cliffs, and mountains, providing a breathtaking setting for visitors to enjoy. The stark contrast between the deep blue waters of the sea and the desolate desert environment is visually stunning, providing good chances for photography and exploration.

Nestled amongst the harsh desert landscapes of the Middle East, the Dead Sea is a geographical beauty that captures the mind. Its name may sound frightening, but it exudes mystery and intrigue, attracting mankind to its beaches for hundreds of years. The mountains that surround the Dead Sea support a diverse range of animal species. Hikers may see ibex, hares, hyraxes, jackals, foxes, and even leopards. The zone is also home to

hundreds of different bird species. Both Jordan and Israel have established nature reserves around the Dead Sea.

The Dead Sea region has a rich history that dates back thousands of years. It is home to various ancient ruins, including the fortress of Masada, where Jewish rebels famously resisted Roman forces in the first century CE. The area also includes biblical locations as the Qumran caves, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were unearthed.

In addition to lounging in the sea and applying mineral-rich mud, visitors to the Dead Sea can engage in a range of outdoor activities such as hiking, jeep trips, and camel rides. The surrounding desert landscape provides opportunities for adventure and discovery, making it an excellent choice for nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts.

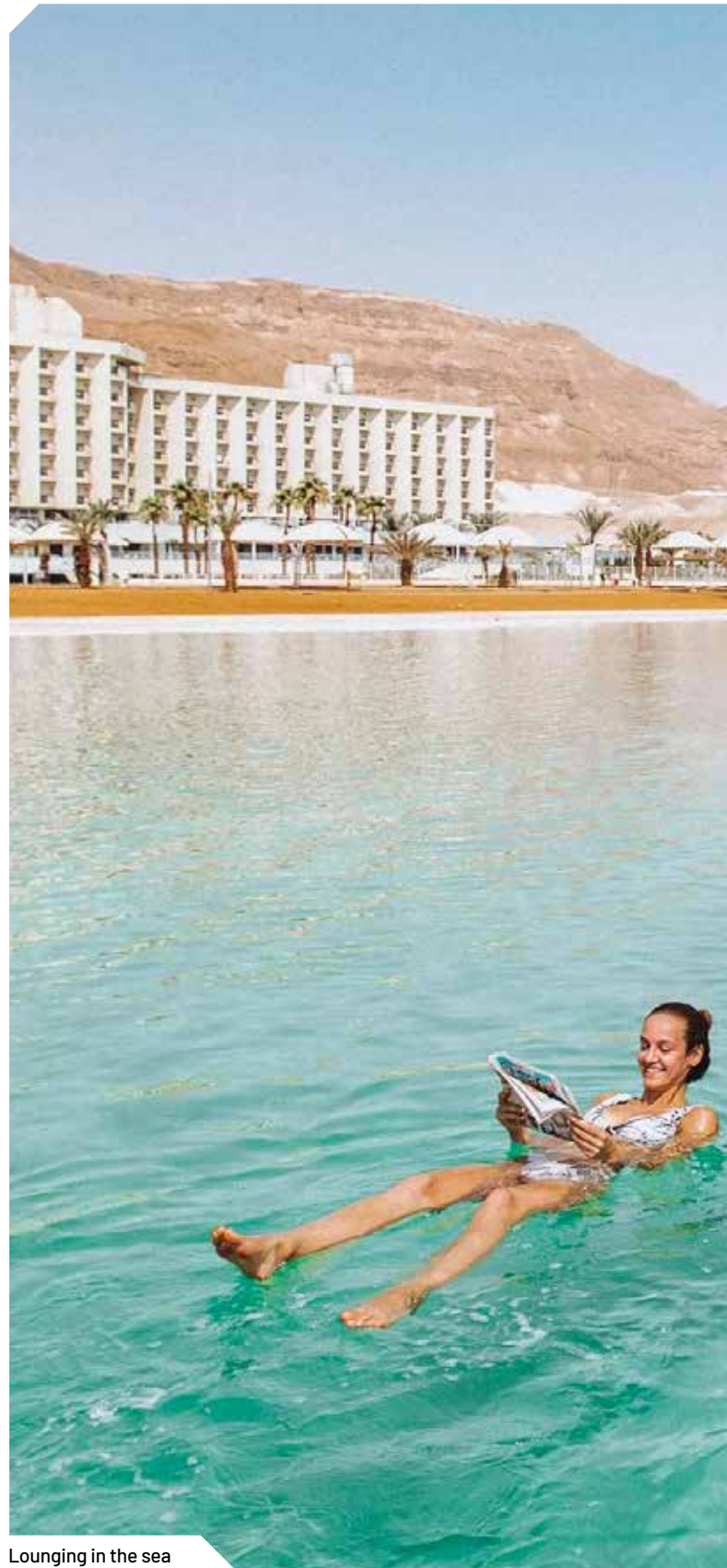
There are several public beaches open along the seashore. Popular beaches include Ein Gedi Beach and Ein Bokek Beach. Some beaches charge an entrance fee.

It is possible to take a bus 'tour' directly to one of the beaches, which is more convenient than riding a public bus because service in the area is intermittent and difficult to negotiate.

The Dead Sea's unique blend of natural beauty, therapeutic benefits, cultural significance, and recreational activities make it a highly appealing location for tourists looking for an unforgettable experience.



Salt formation, Dead Sea



Lounging in the sea



Plan your itinerary

The first Israeli hotels were built in nearby Arad, and since the 1960s, they have been located at the Ein Bokek resort complex. Israel boasts 15 hotels and resorts along its six-kilometre southern shoreline.

Day 1: Relaxation

Morning: Arrive at your preferred hotel near the Dead shore, which provides breathtaking views and direct access to the shore.

Afternoon: Spend the afternoon relaxing and adjusting to the surroundings. Take a leisurely stroll around the Dead Sea's shoreline and marvel at the strange landscape.

Evening: Dine at one of the resort's restaurants, which serves both local and international food. Consider eating foods created with Dead Sea minerals, which are known for their health benefits.

Day 2: Dead sea exploration

Morning: Witness the sunrise over the Dead Sea, an incredible sight as the first rays of light illuminate the lake and surrounding desert landscape.

Mid-morning: Head to the beach or resort pool for a one-of-a-kind floating experience in the Dead Sea's hypersaline waters. Remember to use mineral-rich mud, which is recognised for its rejuvenating effects.

Afternoon: Relax in the sun and think about getting a spa treatment at your resort for a truly luxurious experience.

Evening: Enjoy the sunset over the Dead Sea – a stunning display of colours shining off the calm waters.

Day 3: Cultural and natural highlights

Morning: Explore surrounding landmarks, including Masada, an ancient stronghold located atop a steep cliff overlooking the Dead Sea. Take the cable car up to the summit and visit the archaeological ruins.

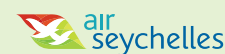
Afternoon: Explore the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve, a verdant sanctuary, complete with hiking paths, waterfalls, and plentiful wildlife. Take a relaxing bath in the natural pools before enjoying a picnic lunch surrounded by breathtaking landscapes.

Evening: Book a sunset yoga or meditation class to unwind and reflect on your stay in the Dead Sea.

Day 4: Departure

Morning: After breakfast take one last stroll around the Dead Sea's shoreline, taking in the peaceful atmosphere and breathtaking scenery.

Afternoon: Depart the Dead Sea region, feeling revitalised and revived after your fantastic journey. On the way home, stop by local sites or cities.



Flight information: www.airseychelles.com

The Green Jewel

WORDS: MARIA SMART

The first impression of La Réunion from the air is of an emerald-green island amid the deep blue of the enormous Indian Ocean. La Réunion, located just north of the Tropic of Capricorn east of Madagascar, is approximately 200 kilometres southwest of Mauritius, the nearest island. Saint-Denis, the capital, is rich in historical monuments that testify to the magnificence of the time. The warm tropical waters off the coast of La Réunion are alive with marine life.

The whales of Reunion Island are the ocean's queens, and enthusiasts are fascinated by and enjoy observing them. Reunion Island is one of the best sites in the world to explore the underwater fascinating realm of these ocean giants. There are trips offered to go as near to these cetaceans as possible while protecting their health and the environment.

Nothing is simpler than admiring these sea giants from land. Headlands have been specially adapted all around the island's west coast to provide breathtaking views of the ocean. Le Barachois is an excellent site to see whales from dry land. You'll even be able to hear whale calls from here, owing to an offshore buoy equipped with a radio transmitter. This is located on Saint-Denis' beachfront.

Historically, the French have kept this gorgeous island a secret from others. However, news of La Réunion's spectacular natural treasures, world-class hiking paths, and a plethora of adventure sports and its intriguing cultural heritage are beginning to emerge.

The Jardin de l'État botanical gardens and the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle can be reached by the Avenue de la Victoire and the Rue de Paris, respectively. The ancient heart of the capital is home to a variety of magnificent buildings, including the Tuscan-style Cathédrale de Saint-Denis. From here, you may go to Rue Maréchal Leclerc and the Grand Marché, an amazing market dedicated to Indian Ocean handicrafts, as well as the Petit Marché, which smells like a thousand fruits and spices.

From Saint-Denis, travel westward across the huge northern cliffs above the town of La Possession to reach Le Port, whose name speaks for itself. This vibrant town is La Réunion's marine port, with a charming flower

market and a bustling commercial district. Beyond the Rivière des Galets lies the island's main natural harbour, Saint-Paul Bay, where the island was first colonised. A maritime cemetery erected during the East India Company's era may be found here, and it contains some extremely old tombs. The Grotte des Premiers Français (first French settlers' cave) is also located here.

The administrative district of Saint-Paul covers a large region, including the rim of the Cirque de Mafate. The summit of Piton Le Maïdo offers stunning views of

La Réunion is a must-see. On your journey down the mountain, stop at the Begue family's L'Alambic still in Petite France to view a historic distillery that makes essential oils from geranium, cryptomeria, and vetiver leaves. Saint-Paul is the island's second largest 'commune' after Saint-Denis, and it boasts an amazing street market. Along the route, stop by the Aquarium and Le Jardin d'Eden floral gardens.

The coastal promenade in Saint-Leu features a sprinkling of lovely stone houses from the French colonial era and is a hotspot for adventure sports. It's an absolute paradise for paragliding, mountain biking, and surfing. The Stella Matutina Agricultural and Industrial Museum, located in Point Saint-Leu, is dedicated to the island's agricultural and industrial heritage and is housed in a former sugar mill.

La Réunion's south shore, known as 'le sud sauvage' (the wild south), is in the shadow of the active volcano Piton de la Fournaise. The scarred landscape here is the product of thousands of years of volcanic activity; enormous tongues of black lava cut through the forest and reach the water at many locations.

The Plaine-des-Cafres, historically a haven for escaped slaves from the coast, is the natural gateway to the Piton de la Fournaise, a smouldering volcano that is undoubtedly La Réunion's most well-known feature. The path to the peak can be congested, but the interesting tormented scenery compensates for the hordes of visitors. Early dawn is the greatest time to climb the volcano since you have a better chance of seeing clear vistas.



Waterfalls at the Cirque de Salazie

The most noteworthy spot on the Plaine-des-Cafres from a visitor's standpoint is Bourg-Murat, which is home to the world-famous Maison du Volcan (Volcano House) museum.

The cirques of Cilaos, Salazie, and Mafate dominate the island's interior, much like the leaves of a three-leafed clover. Listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, these cirques and the ramparts and mountains are symbols and showcase for the beauty of the island's landscapes. These sheer-walled gorges with convoluted peaks and green valleys are the remnants of an old caldera, which was a vast volcanic depression that encompassed the Piton des Neiges, the island's highest point at 3070 metres.

The Cirque de Salazie, accessible by road from Saint-André on the northeast coast, is a natural Eden surrounded by a thousand waterfalls, including the breathtaking Voile de la Mariée. Hell-Bourg, located at the foot of the cirque, is regarded as one of France's most picturesque villages.

The Cirque de Mafate provides a timeless journey to the heart of Reunion Island, a French overseas department in the western Indian Ocean. The cirque was formed by the collapse of the Piton des Neiges volcano and subsequently moulded by water. It is only accessible on foot.

A large number of Indian agricultural workers settled in Saint-André's fertile land. Tamil culture is strongly ingrained here, with fine examples such as the great Temple du Colosse and the new Kalikambal Temple, both of which provide guided tours to the public. Other attractions include the Sucrierie de Bois-Rouge sugar mill and the Maison de la Vanille vanilla plantation.

Réunionese people are very hospitable and their cuisine reflects the island's ethnic variety. Even the most discerning gourmet will be pleasantly surprised by the variety available on Little Métis Island. Raffia fruit-curcuma-scented terrines, vanilla duck, beef and cabbage tree stew, and the local meal 'cari' may all be found in the island's various hotels and restaurants.

Here are six of the best things to do on this beautiful island:

Hiking: La Réunion is a hiker's dream, with spectacular volcanic scenery and lush rainforests. One must-do walk is the strenuous climb to the

peak of Piton de la Fournaise, one of the world's most active volcanoes. Other popular hiking trails include Cirque de Mafate, Cilaos, and Salazie.

Beach and Water Activities: Swimming, snorkelling, and diving are all options for enjoying the island's gorgeous beaches and blue waters. Boucan Canot Beach and L'Hermitage Beach are popular destinations for sunbathing and water sports like surfing and kiteboarding.

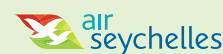
Beautiful Drives: Take a scenic drive along the Route des Tamarins or Route de Cilaos to appreciate the island's stunning scenery. These winding roads offer beautiful vistas of mountains, waterfalls, and coastal cliffs.

Visit Piton de la Fournaise: One of the world's most active volcanoes, to witness nature's incredible force. Hike to the crater rim or take a helicopter trip to see the volcanic landscape from above.

Explore Creole Culture: Immerse yourself in La Réunion's rich cultural legacy by visiting historic Creole villages such as Hell-Bourg in the Cirque de Salazie. Visit local markets, try Creole food, and learn about the island's history at museums such as Maison Folio.

Admire Waterfalls: La Réunion is home to numerous stunning waterfalls, including Trou de Fer, Langevin Falls, and Niagara Falls (not to be confused with the one in North America). Take a hike or helicopter tour to admire these natural wonders up close.

This green jewel in the Indian Ocean is a modern and authentic island that combines Europe's benefits with the allure of a tropical paradise. Whether you're a nature lover, adventure seeker, or culture enthusiast, La Réunion offers something for everyone to enjoy.



Flight information: www.airseychelles.com

Vibrant.& dynamic

WORDS: SILHOUETTE

Sydney, one of Australia's largest city is vibrant and dynamic with a variety of interesting attractions that draw visitors from all over the world. Beyond the municipal limits, Sydney provides access to some of Australia's most stunning natural settings. From the rocky Blue Mountains to the gorgeous beaches of the South Coast, there are infinite opportunities for adventure and exploration within a short drive.

Sydney is home to prominent monuments such as the Sydney Opera House which is one of the most iconic landmarks in Australia and the world. It's located in Sydney Harbour and is renowned for its unique design, resembling billowing sails or seashells. The Opera House hosts over 1,500 performances annually, ranging from classical music to contemporary concerts, opera, theatre, and dance. Its multiple venues include the Concert Hall, Opera Theatre, Drama Theatre, Playhouse, and the Studio. Apart from performances, the Opera House is a major tourist attraction, drawing millions of visitors every year who come to admire its architecture and enjoy its cultural offerings. It's also listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognising its architectural significance and cultural importance.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge is another iconic symbol of Sydney. It's a steel through arch bridge across Sydney Harbour, connecting the Sydney central business district (CBD) with the North Shore. Construction of the bridge began in 1923 and was completed in 1932.

Often referred to simply as 'The Bridge' by locals, it's the world's largest steel arch bridge, measuring about 134 metres (440 feet) from top to water level. The bridge's total length, including approach spans, is about 1,149 metres (3,770 feet). The bridge carries rail, vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic, with eight lanes of road traffic, two rail lines, a pedestrian walkway, and a cycleway. The Bridge has become an integral part of Sydney's identity, featuring prominently in the city's skyline and serving as a backdrop for events such as the annual New Year's Eve fireworks display. Visitors can also climb the bridge for a unique and exhilarating experience, providing stunning views of the harbour and city skyline.

The Sydney coastline is one of the most picturesque and diverse in the world, offering stunning beaches, dramatic cliffs, and beautiful coastal walks.

Stretching over 240 kilometres (150 miles), it encompasses a variety of landscapes, from bustling urban beaches to secluded coves and national park headlands. Some of the most famous beaches along the Sydney coastline include Bondi Beach, known for its golden sands and vibrant surf culture, as well as Manly Beach, popular for its relaxed atmosphere and excellent surfing conditions. Other notable beaches include Coogee, Bronte, Tamarama, and Palm Beach. Apart from its beaches, the Sydney coastline is also characterised by its rugged cliffs and coastal formations, particularly along the eastern suburbs and in the Royal National Park to the south. The Bondi to Coogee Coastal Walk is a famous trail that showcases stunning coastal scenery, including panoramic ocean views, sandstone cliffs, and pristine beaches.

In addition to its natural beauty, the Sydney coastline offers a range of recreational activities, such as swimming, surfing, snorkelling, and coastal hiking. It's also home to a rich array of marine life, including dolphins, whales, and a variety of fish species. Overall, the Sydney coastline is a treasured asset, providing locals and visitors alike with opportunities for relaxation, outdoor adventure, and appreciation of the natural environment.

Sydney is a melting pot of cultures, with dynamic neighbourhoods reflecting communities from all over the world. This diversity is mirrored in the city's food, festivals, and cultural events, making it a vibrant and interesting location to visit. Due to the city's natural beauty and warm climate, outdoor activities can be enjoyed all year. Whether you're climbing in the Blue Mountains, sailing on Sydney Harbour, or picnicking in one of Sydney's numerous parks, there are plenty of opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors.

Sydney is a cultural centre with a strong arts and entertainment scene. From world-class museums and galleries to live music venues and theatre

shows, Sydney always has something going on to stimulate the mind and inspire creativity. Sydney has a wide range of festivals and events throughout the year, celebrating everything from food and wine to music and culture. Highlights include the Sydney Festival, Vivid Sydney, which draw people from near and far.

The Sydney food scene is incredibly diverse and vibrant, reflecting the city's multicultural population and its proximity to fresh, local produce. From fine dining establishments to bustling street food markets, Sydney offers a wide range of culinary experiences to suit every taste and budget.

One of the defining features of Sydney's food scene is its multiculturalism, which is reflected in the wide variety of cuisines available throughout the city. You can find everything from traditional Australian fare to Asian, European, Middle Eastern, and South American cuisine, among others. Chinatown in the city centre is particularly renowned for its authentic Chinese and Asian eateries, while areas like Newtown and Surry Hills offer a melting pot of international flavours.

Sydney is also known for its vibrant cafe culture, with countless cafes dotted throughout the city serving up expertly brewed coffee and delicious brunch options. Locals and visitors alike enjoy leisurely breakfasts or brunches at trendy cafes, often featuring innovative twists on classic dishes and a focus on fresh, locally sourced ingredients.

For those seeking upscale dining experiences, Sydney boasts numerous award-winning restaurants helmed by acclaimed chefs, offering exquisite tasting menus and creative culinary creations. Many of these restaurants showcase Australia's diverse culinary landscape, incorporating native ingredients and flavours into their menus.

Overall, Sydney's combination of stunning scenery, cultural diversity, and exciting activities make it an incredibly vibrant and appealing destination for travellers of all interests.



The Sydney Harbour Bridge



Sydney cityscape



Art Gallery of New South Wales

Exploring Sydney in five days

It allows you to see the city's prominent attractions, magnificent coastline, vibrant culture, and wonderful food. Here's a suggested itinerary to maximise your time:

Day 1: Sydney Harbour and City Highlights

Morning: Begin the day with a visit to the Sydney Opera House. Take a guided tour to discover more about the unique architecture and history.

Midday: Take a stroll along Circular Quay and see the views of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Consider taking a ferry journey to Manly or Taronga Zoo to get a fresh perspective of the harbour.

Afternoon: Explore Sydney's oldest neighbourhood, The Rocks, which is home to historic buildings, beautiful laneways, and artisan markets.

Evening: Have dinner at one of Darling Harbour's waterfront eateries. Consider visiting the SEA LIFE Sydney Aquarium or taking a twilight cruise to view the city skyline at night.

Day 2: Coastal walks and Bondi Beach

Morning: Take the iconic Bondi to Coogee coastline walk. Begin at Bondi Beach, known for its surf culture, then walk along the cliffs, passing by beautiful beaches, rock pools, and magnificent viewpoint places.

Midday: Eat lunch at one of Bondi's chic cafés or go for fish and chips on the beach.

Afternoon: Spend the day lounging on Bondi Beach. You can swim, sunbathe or take a surfing instruction.

Evening: Return to the city and visit Chinatown for dinner. Enjoy great Asian food while soaking in the colourful environment.

Day 3: Exploring Sydney's Culture

Morning: Go to the Art Gallery of New South Wales to view a broad collection of Australian and foreign art.



Echo point and Wentworth Falls



Blue Mountains National Park

Midday: Lunch at The Grounds of Alexandria, a one-of-a-kind dining and shopping destination with stunning gardens and specialty food booths, is recommended.

Afternoon: Visit Darlinghurst and Surry Hills, two thriving neighbourhoods famed for their stylish cafes, boutique stores, and street artwork.

Evening: Attend a show at the Sydney Theatre Company or dine and drink at one of Surry Hills' trendy bars.

Day 4: Trip to the Blue Mountains

Morning: Visit the Blue Mountains National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site noted for its breathtaking scenery, ancient forests, and flowing waterfalls.

Midday: Visit Katoomba and take the Scenic Railway or Skyway for panoramic views of the Jamison Valley.

Afternoon: Explore the Three Sisters rock formation and trek to magnificent overlooks such as Echo Point and Wentworth Falls.

Evening: Return to Sydney and unwind with dinner at a quaint restaurant in the city centre.

Day 5: Sydney's Hidden Gems

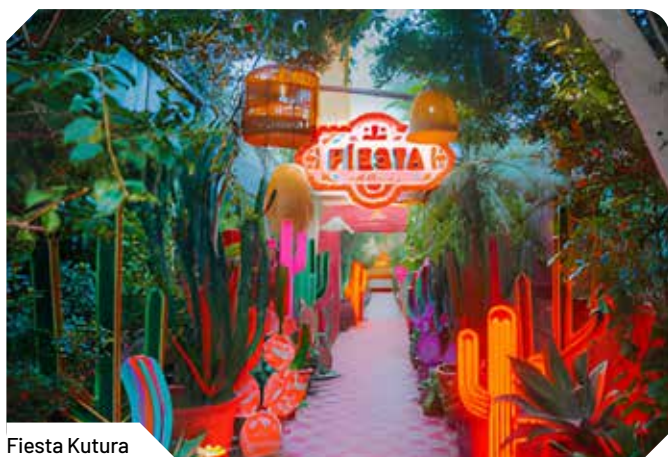
Morning: Discover some of Sydney's hidden gems, such as the Royal Botanic Garden or Wendy's Secret Garden in Lavender Bay.

Midday: Have lunch at one of the harbourside cafes in Walsh Bay or Barangaroo.

Afternoon: Explore the trendy neighbourhoods of Newtown and Glebe, known for their eclectic shops, street art, and multicultural dining options.

Evening: Finish your journey with a sunset cruise on Sydney Harbour, taking in the city's prominent sites as the day draws to a close.

This schedule provides a varied range of experiences, allowing you to see the most of Sydney's natural beauty, cultural sites, and culinary delights in only five days. Adjustments can be made to reflect your interests and preferences.



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Inside Air Seychelles

News and information

Inside Air Seychelles

Global offices

Route network

Our fleet

Important Information

Airport

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

Information

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

Time

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

Electric supply

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

Language

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

Currency

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

Credit cards

Most credit cards and travellers' cheques are accepted.

Banking

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

Public holidays 2024

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

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

Passport requirement

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

Visa requirement

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

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

Ground transport

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

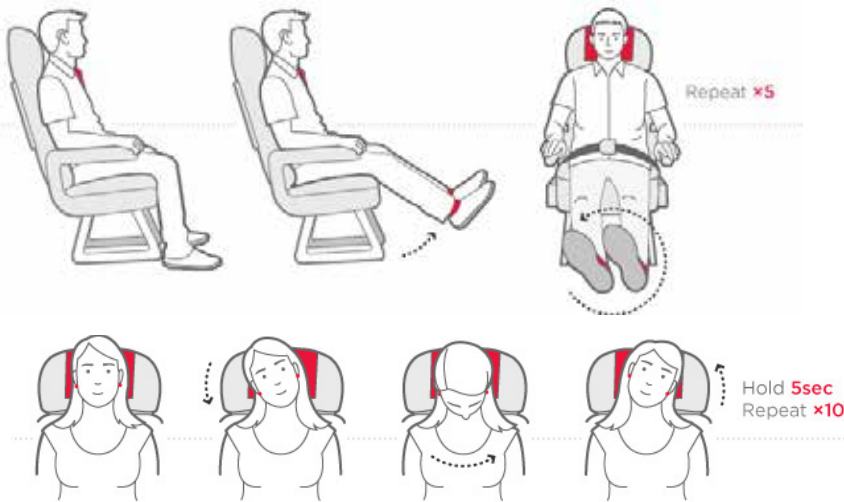
Taxi service

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

Tourist information office

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

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



Seychelles Travel Authorization (STA)

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

Shoulder circles

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

Neck rolls

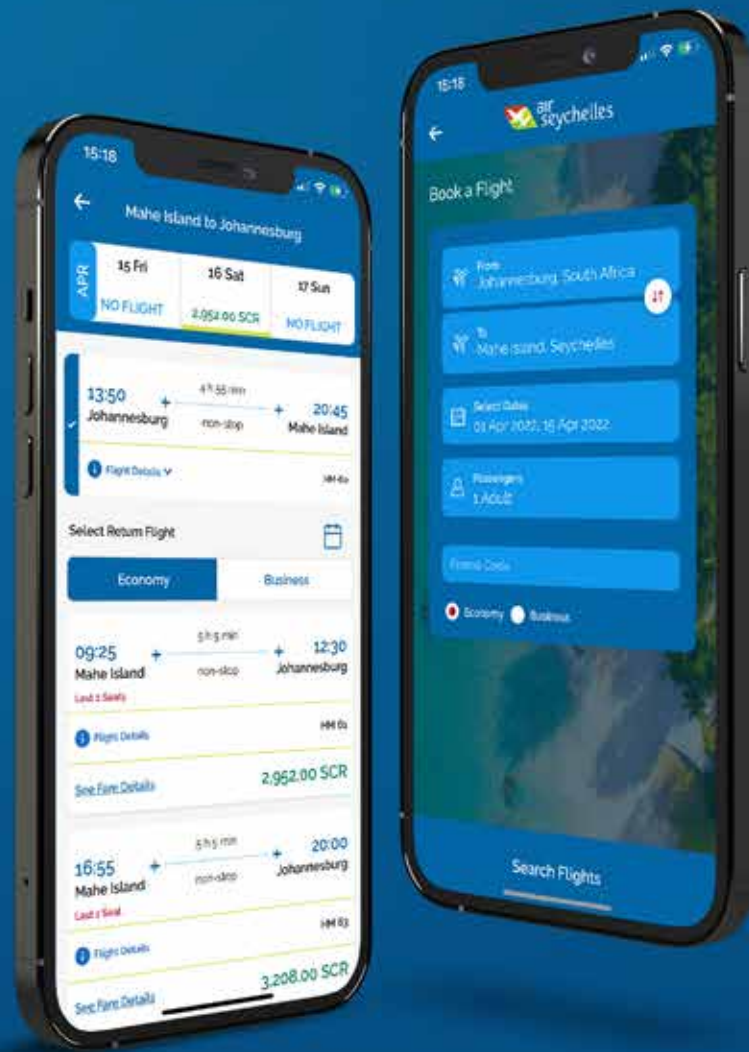
- Sit back in your seat and flatten the headrest.
- Gently and slowly roll your neck to one side, then back through the centre towards the other side.
- Try keeping the back of your neck extended.

Sit up straight

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

Ankle circles

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



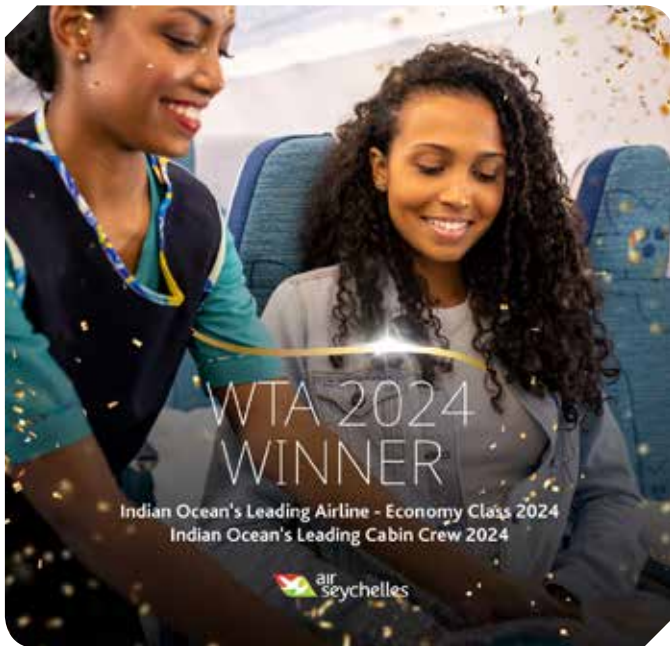
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WORLD TRAVEL AWARDS 2024



Air Seychelles, the flagship carrier of the stunning Seychelles Islands, has once again, clinched two well-deserved accolades at the highly regarded World Travel Awards, which, this year, was timed to coincide with the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) in Dubai on 6 May 2024.

The national airline has been honoured with the following awards:

- Indian Ocean's Leading Airline - Economy Class 2024
- Indian Ocean's Leading Cabin Crew 2024

The World Travel Awards (WTA) has become a cornerstone for many in the travel, tourism and hospitality industry all over the world since its inception in 1993. Created to acknowledge, reward and celebrate excellence across these sectors, each year begins with nominations in different categories, which then propels nominees to engage with the public to canvas for votes. The awards are initiated to businesses to compete within the same region or continent. Air Seychelles falls in the Indian Ocean category battling against other regional airlines such as Air Austral and Air Mauritius to name a few. Winners within each region will then go ahead to head in the Grand Final at the end of the year.

Captain Sandy Benoiton, the airline's Chief Executive Officer accepts the awards with much pride and gratitude. "To win these accolades knowing they are awarded through public vote is proof that Air Seychelles is on the right track. The airline industry is as exciting as it is volatile and we do what we do with passion. Although we did not win as many awards as we did last year, I am immensely proud of my team whose relentless dedication has culminated in clinching these this year. We build on experiences and we will use this as motivation for even better output this year and beyond."

The Grand Final nominations will be announced during the last quarter of the year, and as was done for the regional awards, a public vote will be called in support of the national airline at this time. Air Seychelles would like to take this opportunity to thank all clients, partners, friends and staff members for their undying loyalty and contributions over the years.

CODESHARE PARTNERSHIP



Air Seychelles, the Republic of Seychelles' national airline and SriLankan Airlines, the flag carrier of Sri Lanka, have announced a new code sharing partnership, expanding the number of destinations accessible to customers from the paradise islands flying between Mahé and Colombo.

Over 20 destinations are included in the partnership, which includes much requested ones such as Sydney and Melbourne in Australia as well as other popular stops in India, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. SriLankan Airlines' passengers will also be able to fly from Colombo to Mahé with the activation of the codeshare partnership.

This new codeshare agreement will allow Air Seychelles and SriLankan Airlines to place their codes on each other's flights and enable passengers to continue their journey conveniently using a single booking and with their baggage checked in all the way to the final destination. It also means passengers can book their travels with both airlines, through online travel agencies, as well as with local travel agents.

In June last year, when Air Seychelles launched the Colombo service, the two airlines signed an initial interline agreement that introduced multiple cities within the southeast Asia region to the local market's choice of destinations. Captain Sandy Benoiton, Air Seychelles' Chief Executive Officer said, "now that we have been flying to Colombo for over 9 months, the twice-weekly flights have proven successful. The next step to solidifying our relationship is with this codeshare, allowing even more passengers, the convenience of a single ticket to more points served by our partner in Asia and Australia." Flights under the codeshare agreement began operating in April 2024.



Above: The SriLankan Airlines and Air Seychelles teams at the codeshare partnership agreement signing in Colombo.



AGREEMENT TO BOOST DESTINATION

The National Airline, Air Seychelles and Tourism Seychelles have solidified their commitment to promoting Seychelles as a premier tourist destination through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed on 13 March 2024 at Botanical House. The MOU was signed by Captain Sandy Benoiton, the Chief Executive Officer of Air Seychelles and Mrs. Sherin Francis, the Principal Secretary for Tourism.

The partnership aims to enhance visibility and attract more visitors to the archipelago by leveraging joint activities in targeted markets. Under the agreement, both parties will collaborate closely on various marketing initiatives. A range of communication channels, including social media platforms will be utilised to showcase the unique offerings of Seychelles to potential travellers worldwide.

In a significant move, Air Seychelles has pledged its active participation alongside Tourism Seychelles in key international events such as the World Travel Market – Africa (WTM-Africa), the Outbound Travel Mart (OTM) in India, the Salon du Prêt à Partir in Mauritius and other joint marketing activities throughout the year, specifically targeting markets crucial to the destination's growth. In return, Tourism Seychelles has committed to supporting Air Seychelles by actively participating in the airline's milestone events throughout the year. This will further strengthen the bond between the two entities and reinforce their shared goal of driving tourism growth in Seychelles.

The signing of this MOU marks the continuation of the strategic partnership between Air Seychelles and Tourism Seychelles. This partnership will continue to elevate the destination's profile on the global stage.

EVENING FOR LOCAL TRAVEL AGENT PARTNERS

In a bid to recognise and express gratitude to its local travel agent partners for their efforts and contributions towards the airline in the recent past, Air Seychelles recently hosted a special appreciation evening in their honour on 15 March 2024.

The casual and convivial environment of the newly opened Lo Brizan Restaurant set the scene for an in-depth product presentation delivered by Franky Hetimier, Air Seychelles' Manager Sales & Market Development, followed by a certificate awarding ceremony by the Chief Executive Officer as well as served as a platform for discussions and networking amongst the agents and the airline staff present for the occasion.

In attendance were representatives from Sea Shell Travel Ltd, Mason's Air Travel, Silver Pearl Tours & Travel, Creole Air Travel, Travel Plus (Pty) Ltd, and Ocean Air Travel.

Captain Sandy Benoiton, Air Seychelles' Chief Executive Officer remarks, 'We are appreciative of our local travel partners



for their partnership and dedication extended to the airline over the years. I look forward to more successful collaborations in the future as we negotiate the evolving courses of the travel industry so we can keep offering the best experiences to our mutual clients.'

To conclude the evening's agenda was the official launch of an annual Top Travel Agents Awards programme whereby the national airline will reward the top three travel agents at the end of this year based on their revenue performance.

Our Network

International Network

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



MAP KEYS

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

CODESHARE PARTNERS



INTERLINE PARTNERS



Sri Lankan Airlines Network (India)



Our Fleet

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

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



Airbus A320-200neo

Aircraft: 2

Length: 37.57m

Wingspan: 34.09m

Passenger capacity: 168

Cruising speed: 840km/h

Cruising altitude: 37,000ft

Air Seychelles Domestic Network



Dhc-6 Twin Otter-400 Series

Aircraft: 5

Length: 15.80m

Wingspan: 19.80m

Passenger capacity: 19

Cruising speed: 260km/h

Cruising altitude: 10,000ft

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

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

Air Seychelles global offices

India 	Capital: New Delhi Languages: Hindi, English Currency: Indian Rupee Area: 3,287,590 km ² 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
Israel 	Capital: Jerusalem Language: Hebrew Currency: Israel Shekel Area: 20,770 km ² 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
Maldives 	Capital: Malé Languages: Dhivehi, English Currency: Maldivian rufiyaa Land area: 300 km ² 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
Mauritius 	Capital: Port Louis Languages: French, English, Creole Currency: Rupees Area: 2,040 km ² 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
Seychelles 	Capital: Victoria Languages: Seychellois Creole, English Currency: Seychelles Rupee Area: 456 km ² 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
South Africa 	Capital: Pretoria Languages: English, Afrikaans (11 official languages) Currency: South African Rand Area: 1,221,037 km ² 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
Sri Lanka 	Capital: Colombo Languages: Sinhala, Tamil Currency: Sri Lankan Rupee Area: 65,610 km ² Population: 22.16 million Air Seychelles destination: Colombo	Air Park (Pvt) Ltd. 377A/1 Galle Road, Colombo 03 Sri Lanka Tel: +94 (0) 11 237 2870 Email: airseychelles@airpark.aero

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