



the seychelles islands
another world





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Not just another place, another world.

Unique is an overused word. It has appeared in the pages of so many holiday brochures that it has lost any real meaning. That is unless you are describing Seychelles. When applied to our glistening islands 'unique' magnificently and triumphantly reclaims its true meaning. Not just once but over and over again. The 115 pristine islands that sparkle in the middle of the Indian Ocean are one of the world's greatest treasures. A place where natural purity and authenticity are perfectly cocooned from the pernicious influences of commercialism. A place where tranquillity and simplicity can be found and innocence rediscovered. A place like no other and another world entirely.

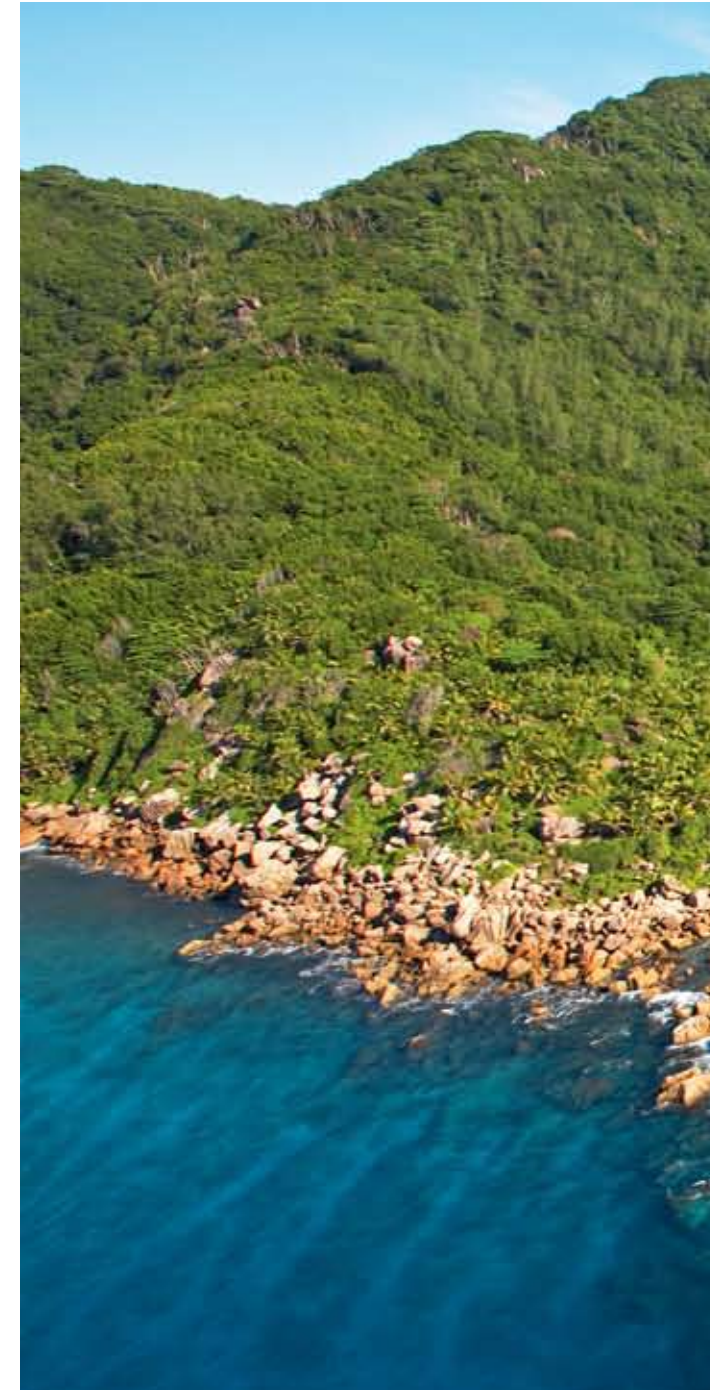


The death of the dinosaur; the birth of Seychelles.

The story begins 150 million years ago, when the dinosaurs held sway over a fledgling earth and the place that was to eventually become Seychelles lay landlocked at the heart of the super-continent of Gondwanaland. Over the ensuing millennia shifting tectonic plates slowly began to fragment this vast landscape but it was a seismic event of hotly debated origin that led to the sudden end of the dinosaurs' long rule and the birth of Seychelles as we know it today.

The giant rupture that precipitated this chain of events, possibly the result of an underwater volcanic eruption or meteor impact, caused a shard of granite from India's west coast to break free, while the continent continued its northwards drift. Perhaps by chance, perhaps by design, Seychelles found itself alone, isolated and transformed. At one time a single landbound mass, now a line of shimmering islands floating free and the one place on earth where granitic rocks are found mid-ocean. Together with others of coral formation, these scattered oases make up the Seychelles archipelago, lying just south of the equator, sparkling like jewels across a million miles of azure ocean.

Imagine an armada of Noah's Arks, each one protecting diverse and remarkable life forms and you'll understand why they are its people's pride and prized natural heritage, and a true lasting legacy of Gondwana.





Not just one Garden of Eden, 115 of them.

Forgotten for centuries except by the most fearless sailors and pirates, the islands were destined to stay uninhabited until the late 18th century when the French, expanding their empire across the Indian Ocean, made them their home. They called the islands Seychelles.

Over the following decades this unique place spawned many stories, legends and claims, none more entrancing than that of the Garden of Eden. General Gordon, who met his skewered fate at Khartoum, first opined that the island of Praslin and its Vallée de Mai, a primeval forest where the magical coco de mer palm grows in abundance, was the true location of the biblical paradise found at the core of Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

He based his claim partly on the fact that the Seychelles were the most ancient mid-ocean islands in the world, the highest peaks of the submerged remnants of Gondwana. But his theory also stemmed from his belief that the coco de mer was the Tree of Knowledge. Certainly, the distinctly feminine curves of the coco de mer's kernel would have planted the term 'forbidden fruit' in the mind of many a prude.

The Vallée de Mai, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, has never lost its mysterious romantic allure and is one of Praslin's main attractions. The damp, primeval atmosphere that lingers beneath the forest canopy represents the epitome of untouched, natural beauty and maybe even a clue to the very origins of man.









Seychelles: home to some of the world's most precious possessions.

The islands' violent birth from the crumbling vestiges of Gondwana has created not just a unique destination, over 1,000 miles from foreign coastlines, but one that bristles with an abundant array of exotic flora and fauna.

Safe inside the boundaries of one of nature's last sanctuaries, the spectacular diversity of endemic and indigenous species is almost impossible to comprehend. Nowhere else on earth will you stumble upon the Jellyfish Tree, the Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher, the world's smallest frog, the heaviest land tortoise, the world's largest fish and the Indian Ocean's only flightless bird. The islands also boast some of the most spectacular seabird colonies in the world, where there are 13 species and 17 subspecies that occur here and only here. Perhaps though it is the coco de mer palms that have the greatest allure. Found only in Seychelles, where they grow naturally on the islands of Praslin and Curieuse, the coco de mer is arguably Seychelles' most potent icon, and unquestionably, its best ambassador to the more amorous traveller. This rare and wondrous specimen was long thought to be an underwater tree whose nuts, occasionally washed up on the beaches of far away kingdoms, represented all that is magical about the islands' beguiling charm.

In a country where almost half of the limited landmass has been granted protected status as nature reserves, the Vallée de Mai and remarkable Aldabra, the world's largest raised coral atoll, are both UNESCO World Heritage Sites. To suggest that Seychelles is an exciting destination for naturalists, ornithologists and ecotourists would be a slight understatement. After all, where else is there so much to explore and so much still to discover?



*Timeless sanctuary for unique flora and fauna...
and weary travellers*

A destination of heart-stopping beauty and diversity, Seychelles nurtures a kaleidoscopic array of unique flora and fauna, safe within the boundaries of its virgin world.

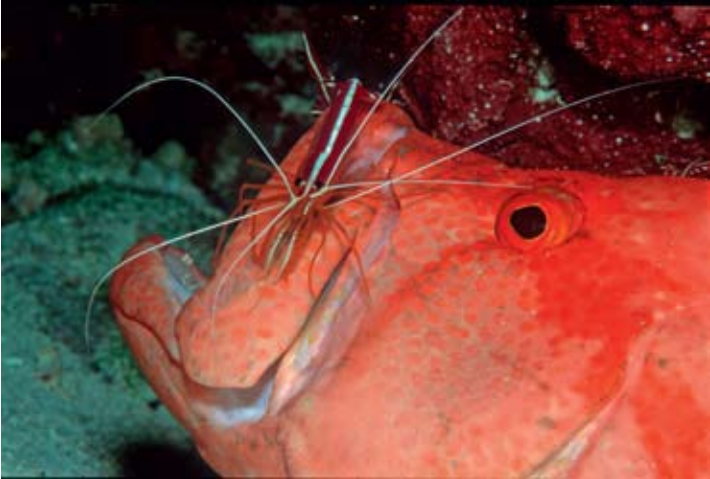
Seychelles is home to some of the most spectacular seabird colonies in the world and the names of such islands as Praslin, La Digue, Bird, Aride, Frégate, Cousin and Aldabra have become bywords as much for the unparalleled bird-watching opportunities they offer as for their own stunning natural beauty. The exceptional diversity of our flora is everywhere apparent, from the mist forests of towering granite peaks, throughout our pristine, primeval forests right down to the islands' shimmering shores.

Elsewhere within this sanctuary that has slumbered, undisturbed, since the very dawn of time are myriad other natural treasures: an ocean so warm, clear and welcoming that you might confuse it for your own personal aquarium where cavalcades of brightly-coloured reef fish dart in and out of corals like an underwater firework display and where, in places, you may be surrounded by 800 different species of fish on just a single dive.

Most recently the islands have become a sanctuary of another kind – for travellers in search of the extraordinary, the authentic and the heartfelt welcome of a people who live close to their roots in a place where harmony, as if to mirror Nature itself, has become a way of life.









The perfect place to do everything or absolutely nothing.

With the powder-soft sand between your toes, impossibly smooth granite rocks soaring out of a cobalt ocean and the sun a permanent fixture in a cloudless sky, you may be forgiven for associating Seychelles with nothing more than the world's most beautiful beaches. But put aside the idea of a deliciously idle fortnight, for here is the opportunity to explore a wondrous natural paradise, an opportunity to be jealously seized and never forgotten.

Island hopping whether by boat, plane or helicopter promises a true sense of the islands' diversity. Each has its own character: a timeless miniature world, flourishing in splendid isolation far from the hubbub of modern life. Nature trails wind their way through granite peaks and lush mist forests, and hidden coves harbour secrets that few, if any, have discovered. Scuba dive in an ocean of kaleidoscopic colours and swim alongside 40-foot long, plankton-eating whale sharks or skim the surface of the turquoise waters on water-skis, a kayak or a catamaran. Indeed, if the world's best fly-fishing can't tempt you why not, from the comfort of the boat, enjoy unrivalled deep-sea fishing instead? Your catch could include marlin, sailfish, green jobfish and skipjack tuna.

Alternatively, avoid the ocean's splendours altogether and indulge in a round of golf. In Seychelles there is no shortage of spectacular distractions. None more so than the vivid sunset that marks the end of every evening - an incredible spectrum of colours that is never duplicated. And a staggeringly beautiful curtain-closer to an unforgettable day, no matter how you choose to spend it.



Seychelles: a unique place, a unique people.

The Seychellois nation is that rarest of success stories: a colourful and harmonious fusion of ethnic diversity. A place where the people have come from all over the world and brought their rich cultures and customs with them: a genetic and artistic melting pot that is in evidence everywhere. A Roman Catholic Cathedral sits alongside an Anglican Cathedral, which in turn rubs shoulders with a Seventh Day Adventist Church, a Mosque and a Hindu Temple. For a place so small Seychelles' cultural breadth is astonishing.

The national language is Creole, adapted from 17th Century French and, like many of the people, peppered with influences from Africa and Madagascar. It has provided a platform for a number of successful poets, authors and playwrights. Born of this fusion of cultures, Seychellois cuisine is equally spectacular. It offers the subtlety and flair of the French with the piquant flavours and exotic culinary combinations of the East to produce a mouth-watering array of textures, tastes, colours and ingredients. The ocean's seafood and the islands' fresh vegetables and fruits arrive at your table guaranteed to seduce the most refined palate.

Traditional dances and music like the Moutia, the Sega and the Kanmtole, may accompany this gastronomic feast. Performed to the beat of drums, fiddles and guitars, the Sega's evocative rhythms and provocative movements are filled with sexual innuendo. Which leads rather appropriately to the subject of matrimony. In a place famed for bringing people together, where better to consummate your union than in the Vallée de Mai, the venue for Adam and Eve's first date?





A natural paradise with a generous sprinkling of modern essentials.

The modern traveller longs for escape. On a crowded planet the desire to flee the ordinary and sample the exceptional, even for a moment, is more prevalent than ever. Seychelles is about as far away as one can get from the processed, packaged and mundane experiences served up by many other destinations. Its isolation from a frenetic world means the islands enjoy a political and religious harmony found in few other places.

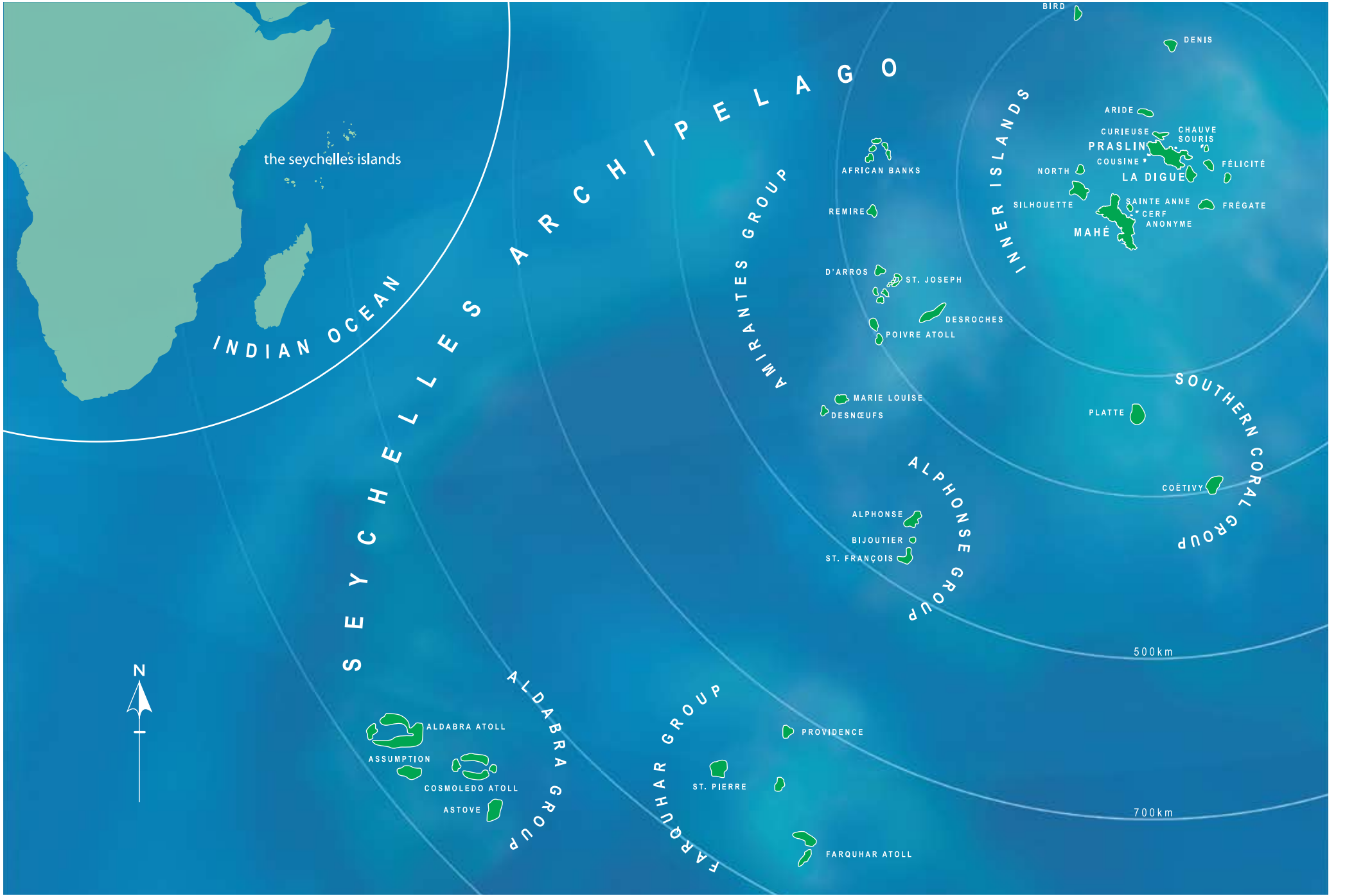
But that's not to say the finer things in life have passed us by. Our accommodation, which ranges from secluded island hideaways and 5-star resorts to small hotels, quaint guesthouses and self-catering chalets, is broad, modern and inviting. Far from being intrusive, each one blends seamlessly with its environment – an aesthetic and environmental essential. You'll be relieved to know that two things you won't find are global franchises and sprawling shopping centres. And the nearest thing to fast food is a fish curry. However, museums, restaurants, nightlife, good transport connections and a friendly, up-to-date tourism industry, we have in abundance.

Getting around is easy, as indeed is getting here in the first instance. Despite the considerable distance from our nearest neighbour you won't need a visa nor, unique for tropical islands, any vaccinations. Malaria is not something you'll encounter in Seychelles.

For body and mind no other tropical destination is as welcoming, fulfilling and safe. Seychelles may be 1,000 miles from anywhere else but once you're here it will feel like a million.







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SEYCHELLES ARCHIPELAGO



500 km

700 km

The Seychelles Islands.

There are two categories of islands: the granitic 'Inner' that cluster around the principal islands of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue, whose verdant peaks climb skywards from virgin forests and immaculate beaches; and the 'Outer': a sparkling array of flat, coralline islands extending westwards towards the coast of Africa that includes legendary Aldabra, the world's largest raised coral atoll. The 'Inner Islands' are the cultural focal point of Seychelles where the majority of the population lives while the 'Outer Islands' remain miniature worlds, little touched by man thus offering a unique and incomparable island experience.

MAHÉ

This fertile, granite island with verdant forests, soaring peaks and over 65 beaches enjoys a rich diversity of flora and fauna to be discovered by organised excursions as well as on walks and trails through lush countryside.

North Mahé, home to famous Beau Vallon beach, tends to be more populous than other regions of the island, and discreetly features a range of hotels of all sizes, guesthouses and villas.

South Mahé presents, in contrast, a wonderfully pastoral aspect and is home to some of the island's prettiest beaches and villages too, all made accessible by an efficient network of roads.

Victoria, one of the tiniest capitals in the world, has managed to retain much of its original charm and character with outstanding examples of traditional architecture, a busy market, shops, boutiques and service providers.

PRASLIN

Praslin's original name of 'Isle de Palme' bears eloquent testament to its reputation as home to the Vallée de Mai UNESCO World Heritage Site, where the famous coco de mer grows wild in abundance. Seychelles' second largest island, Praslin lies 40 kilometres north-east of Mahé - 15 minutes by plane or 45 minutes

by catamaran ferry. Divided by a ridge of hills intersected by a road that leads through the Vallée de Mai, Praslin possesses some of Seychelles' most striking beaches such as Anse Lazio, widely acclaimed to be the most beautiful beach on earth.

Featuring the only 18-hole championship golf course in Seychelles and a luxurious casino, Praslin also has a rich assortment of hotels and guesthouses steeped in Creole hospitality.

The island is ideally situated for holidaymakers wishing to island hop to La Digue, Chauve Souris, Curieuse, St. Pierre, Cousine, and the island bird reserves of Cousin and Aride.

LA DIGUE

La Digue, lying 45 kilometres from Mahé and 7 kilometres from Praslin is the fourth largest island in Seychelles, celebrated for its granite boulders that seem to have been sculpted by a divine hand to adorn beaches of breathtaking beauty such as Anse Source D'Argent.

The island, where more traditional modes of transport such as bicycles and oxcarts still hold sway, offers authentic island-style accommodation, mainly situated on the west-coast while the east remains more or less untouched.

La Digue serves as an ideal stepping-stone to the nearby islands of Grande Soeur and Petite Soeur, Félicité, Coco and Marianne.

ALPHONSE

Alphonse is a triangular coral atoll sheltered by the crystalline waters of a turquoise lagoon situated south-west of Mahé.

This exclusive island resort offers the spacious comfort of 25 air-conditioned thatched chalets and 5 sumptuous executive villas, each affording a splendid view of the ocean. The island offers the best salt-water fly-fishing in the world.

BIRD

Bird is the most northerly island in all of Seychelles, surrounded by sparkling white beaches and crystal blue waters. Twenty four individual beachfront bungalows offer a 'back to nature' experience amid the gardens of an ancient coconut plantation, a bird sanctuary, a nesting site for turtles and the home of Esmeralda, the world's largest giant tortoise.

CERF

Mahé's closest neighbour is renowned for the good swimming and snorkelling opportunities it offers. Home to a population of well-established settlers, most of whom commute to Mahé, Cerf now boasts several accommodation establishments that highlight the many charms of this quaintly traditional island.

CHAUVE SOURIS

An intimate hideaway that blends seamlessly with its environment and provides a cocoon of tropical comforts suspended between granite rocks, turquoise ocean and cerulean sky.

COUSINE

Cousine Island offers a tropical island holiday experience with a degree of privacy found in very few places on earth. With four individual old French colonial style villas, exclusivity is the order of the day as a maximum of only ten guests are accommodated at any one time. Cousine is home to five of Seychelles' endemic birds as well as a variety of other endemic fauna and spectacular marine life.

DENIS

Denis Island lies north of Mahé and comprises 25 distinctive, well-appointed cottages. Its romantic ambience makes it ideal for honeymoons, while its glimmering beaches are just made for soaking up the tropical sun and azure sea. An excellent cuisine, inspired by fresh harvest from the ocean and the produce of the island farm will please the palate of the most exacting gourmet. Denis Island is also an ideal base for thrilling deep-sea fishing expeditions.

DESROCHES

Remote and unspoiled Desroches Island, lying in the shade of a plantation of coconut palms and surrounded by 14 kilometres of breathtaking beaches, is situated 250 kilometres from Mahé.

The resort boasts 20 junior suites arranged in a manner that reflects an authentic Creole architectural style whilst its surrounding islands are renowned for spectacular diving and big game fishing adventures

FRÉGATE

This most easterly of the granitic islands offers the ultimate private island experience. Featuring only 16 luxurious villas, seven outstanding beaches and some of the rarest flora and fauna on earth, Frégate offers refinement and elegance, breathtaking natural beauty, exquisite cuisine as well as a complete range of water sports and recreational activities.

NORTH

North Island provides an eco-friendly island experience where a philosophy of 'barefoot' luxury aims to provide the very best in seclusion, location and accommodation.

Eleven villas, each one handcrafted from natural elements to an astonishing degree of perfection, boast individual plunge pools, a health spa and breathtaking views of stunning beaches and verdant hillsides.

SILHOUETTE

The exotic, forgotten world of Silhouette represents Seychelles at its pristine best. Its unspoiled beauty has been elegantly complemented by Labriz Silhouette, a new luxurious resort with more than 100 individual units, a spa and five restaurants.

ROUND ISLAND (Mahé)

Situated in the middle of the National Marine Park, the five-acre Round Island Resort, featuring 10 oceanfront beach villas with infinity pools and Serena Spa will open in late 2010. The resort's top-end facilities add a new dimension to this historic island with its central location and colourful history.

SAINTE ANNE

Sainte Anne, situated in the National Marine Park just to the north of Mahé, features 79 luxurious, sea-facing villas nestling against a spectacular backdrop and bordering the island's two main beaches. An unmatched gourmet experience in three main restaurants combined with a world class spa promises the ultimate indulgence of mind, body and soul.







Where to stay.

ISLAND GETAWAYS

A total of 16 islands, including 12 island getaways with only a single lodge per island, provide an authentic tropical island experience and offer a range of accommodation choices from the homely comforts of rustic beachside bungalows to the pampered privacy and luxury of 5-star resorts.

24 & OVER

In Seychelles, a hotel offering more than 24 rooms is considered large although you will find a few hotels offering 100 rooms or more. All are favourably located on or close to a stunning beach and offer most of the usual amenities such as a choice of bars and restaurants, water sport facilities and programmes of evening entertainment.

24 & UNDER

A variety of smaller hotels, each with its own character and charm propose simpler comforts, typical of a Creole family guesthouse, evoking an intimate, home-away-from-home feeling.

SELF-CATERING

A selection of self-catering establishments offer visitors privacy, comfort and independence within a homely environment.

ACCOMMODATION AFLOAT

A wide selection of specialised craft, both sail and power, will entice you to cruise the warm, azure waters of the most spectacular archipelago on earth and experience the breathtaking beauty of its romantic bays and deserted beaches.



Activities.

SAILING

Outside the cyclone belt and offering a year-round sailing season, moderate swells and gentle tides, there is no better way to enjoy Seychelles than by cruising its pristine waters by catamaran, keelboat, bareboat or kayak, to name but a few.

MIND, BODY AND SOUL

From the signature treatments of dedicated spas offering relaxing massages with exotic herbal oils, scrubs, detox baths and invigorating wet-treatments to a full range of beauty and grooming services, Seychelles' spas hold the answer to your complete renewal of mind, body and soul.

FLORA AND FAUNA

Seychelles is a pristine sanctuary for diverse species of flora and fauna. The islands are home to an exciting diversity of birdlife that can be discovered in the wild or in specially designated reserves. Discover the treasures of this living natural history museum along its nature trails, through its breathtaking landscape, several national parks and other reserves and its increasing number of exciting eco-tourism ventures.

FISHING

The stuff of fisherman's tales. Over 1.4 million sq. km of fishing grounds offering catches of marlin, giant barracuda, shark and other prize game fish. Whether saltwater fly-fishing, blue water fly-fishing or deep-sea fishing, you will be rewarded with some of the finest fishing in the ocean.

DIVING

Open the door to a vast world that lies between 4 and 10 degrees south of the equator. Home to a marine extravaganza as diverse and vibrant as it is unique. The Inner Islands reveal an abundance of marine life including butterflyfish, angelfish, soldierfish and squirrelfish among others and reefs that feature octopus, spiny lobster and a plethora of nudibranchs.

The Outer Islands offer rewarding experiences around the numerous coral atolls and sand cays accessible mainly by live-aboard charter yacht. There are dive centres located on the island of Desroches, famous for its caves and canyons, and also on Alphonse with its spectacular drop-off.

FAMILY FUN

Although Seychelles enjoys an enviable reputation as the romantic destination of the tropics, it also proposes enticing holidays for families seeking glorious days packed with sea, sun and fun. A number of hotels throughout the islands have swimming pools and tennis courts and some also offer a range of water sports facilities, kiddies clubs and baby-sitting services.

Motorised water sports are available in Mahé's Beau Vallon bay while the sands of countless beaches and the friendly waters just offshore will ensure memorable moments of family fun.

GOLF

The Seychelles Golf Club on Mahé has a 9-hole course while Praslin's Lémuria Resort boasts a spectacular new 18-hole championship course with views that will take your breath away.

HORSE RIDING

From La Digue's L'Union Estate take a guided trek along its magical shoreline and savour the stunning scenery of one of the world's most beautiful islands as you take in its innumerable charms in the way that nature intended – slowly!

SURF, WIND AND WAVE

On selected beaches the waves and wind are seasonal but challenging. Seychelles has a long tradition of great windsurfing opportunities for novice and expert alike, especially during the south east trades (May-September) when average wind speeds are 12-15 knots increasing to 25 during peak season in July and August.

Surfing is also a popular pastime off Mahé, Praslin and La Digue but close attention must be paid to currents and underlying reefs. Kite surfing is also popular, especially during Seychelles' windier moments. You are advised to bring your own equipment.

SWIMMING AND SNORKELLING

Step from uncrowded beaches straight into the warm embrace of the purest turquoise water and live your dream of a perfect tropical island lifestyle in the land of perpetual summer. And, in the waters just offshore, you will discover the enchantment of the Seychelles marine parks where a living aquarium awaits you in the form of colourful schooling reef fish, octopus, lobster and turtle.

WATER SPORTS

For thrills on the ocean, Beau Vallon bay is the place. Enjoy a selection of water sports that includes water-skiing, parachute rides, jet-skis, banana rides, sailing and so much more. Non-motorised water sports are widely available at some resorts.

UNDER THE STARS

Enjoy the unique atmosphere of the local clubs and bars where you can dance to the latest music until the small hours. Most large hotels have public bars and often host their own programmes of evening entertainment where you can try local dances such as the Sega and Moutia. You can even test lady luck at casinos on Mahé and Praslin.

DINING OUT

Eating out in Seychelles ranges from the refined international cuisine of 5 star resorts and excellent local restaurants to delicious Creole dishes served to you in charming seaside bistros where you can soak up the vistas with your feet in the sand. Many hotels cater specifically for Asian, European and international tastes. Throughout the islands you'll also find an array of cafés, pizzerias and snack bars.





And more

TAXIS & LOCAL TRANSPORT

Explore the nooks and crannies of the isles by taxis which offer half or full day tours of Mahé and Praslin. La Digue offers leisurely transfers from the jetty by ox-cart as well as the more conventional taxis. It is advisable to check fares in advance with the taxi driver. Use only licensed taxis identifiable by the 'TAXI' light on the roof of the vehicles, and by the driver's identification badge.

BUSES

Daily services on Mahé and Praslin operate between 05h30 and 19h00. Weekday schedules operate every 30 minutes from most areas throughout Mahé to Victoria. Timetables are available either from the Central Bus depot in Victoria or from the local Seychelles Tourist Offices.



BICYCLE HIRE

Hiring a bicycle will enable you to explore the islands at your own pace, stopping by virgin forests and at artists' galleries and wayside restaurants on your way to trackless, white powdered beaches.

CAR HIRE

Embark on a personal adventure through the islands of Mahé and Praslin, taking in mountain vistas, secluded bays and off-the-beaten-track restaurants.

FERRIES

Traditional, sail-assisted schooner-type ferries and a modern high speed Cougar catamaran operate in Seychelles. On Mahé, ferries operate from the inter-island quay in Victoria to Baie Ste. Anne on Praslin, and to La Passe on La Digue.

SOUVENIRS

Local artists apply their skills across a broad spectrum, ranging from rustic to the refined, working with materials that include stained glass, coconut shells, coral, fibres, bamboo, metal and pottery. You can also shop for locally-made artefacts, baskets and bags, pareos, books and clothing in Mahé, Praslin and La Digue as well as in many hotel boutiques and out-of-the-way galleries.

HOW TO GET THERE

The national airline Air Seychelles operates scheduled flights from London, Paris, Rome, Mauritius, South Africa and Singapore. Qatar Airways and Emirates fly to and from Seychelles with connecting flights to various worldwide sectors through Dubai and Doha. Other operating airlines include Air France, Kenya Airways, Condor, Air Austral. Private aircraft are welcomed at Mahé International Airport after having cleared all relevant formalities with the Civil Aviation Authority.

TRAVELLERS TIPS

Climate

Temperatures range between 24° and 32° centigrade all year round. The year is divided between the northwest trade winds (December-March), when it is generally hot and humid, and those of the southeast (May-September), when it is drier and cooler. March, April, May, October and November are normally calm and relatively windless.

Communications

Competing GSM networks operate with full International roaming agreements with most countries. Payphones are available in most districts on the Inner Islands. Internet service providers, Internet cafés, postal and courier services are located in central Victoria with postal services and Internet cafés also available on Praslin and La Digue.

Credit cards

MasterCard/Access and Visa Cards are widely accepted in Seychelles. American Express and Diners Club to a lesser extent.

Currency

The local currency is the Seychelles Rupee (Sr) made up of 100 cents. Notes come in denominations of Sr10.00, Sr25.00, Sr50.00, Sr100.00 and Sr500.00 and coins from Sr5.00 downwards. Seychelles accepts all major currencies. Traveller's cheques are accepted at all banks.

Drinking Water

Tap water on Mahé and Praslin is safe and drinkable. However, when visiting the other islands it is advisable to drink bottled spring water.

Entry Formalities

There are no visa requirements to enter Seychelles. Documents required for immigration clearance are:

- A valid passport
- Return or onward ticket
- Proof of accommodation
- Sufficient funds for the duration of your stay

Presentation of the above documents will grant you a Visitor's Permit issued upon arrival by the Seychelles Department of Immigration. The Visitor's Permit is valid for a maximum of one month, extended stay available upon application to the Department of Immigration.

Foreign exchange regulations

Visitors to the islands may make payments for services/products in any currency including Seychelles rupees. The discretion to pay in another currency other than the Seychelles rupee shall lay solely with the visitor. Exchange rates will be determined by the market and may differ from bank to bank or at various bureaux de change. The computed traded exchange rates are featured on the Central Bank of Seychelles website, in the Nation newspaper, and are also available at all banks.

Exchanging foreign currency into Seychelles Rupees must only be done at banks, with authorised money dealers such as a bureau de change, or with other licenced operators.

Visitors should refrain from exchanging money with any individuals who approach them in a public place as there is a very high possibility that those persons are engaging in unauthorized dealing, possibly with counterfeit currency.

Health matters

A valid yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travellers over 1 year of age who come from or who have passed through a partly or wholly infected area (South America and Africa but excluding South Africa) within the preceding 6 days. There is NO risk of contracting malaria or yellow fever in Seychelles. Health clinics exist on the islands of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue and there are dispensaries on each of the islands offering accommodation

Hours of business

Office hours are between 0800 and 1600. Many shops outside the Capital remain open until 1900

Banking hours

Banking hours are generally Monday-Friday 0800hrs-1400hrs, and Saturday 0800hrs-1100hrs. All banks process traveller's cheques and foreign exchange transactions. Passports are required for

visitors' transactions and nominal commissions may be charged. ATM facilities exist at major banks on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue and at the airport on Mahé and Praslin. Please note that these provide cash in local currency..

Language

Seychelles has three official languages English, French and Creole.

Religion

Most of the population is Roman Catholic, with Anglican and other Protestant churches on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue existing in harmony alongside Muslim, Hindu and Baha'i communities.

Shopping

Shops are open 09h00 to 16h00 during weekdays and from 08h00 to 12h00 on Saturdays. Most shops in Victoria are closed on Sundays and public holidays.

Safety & Valuables

Seychelles is a safe destination but it is advisable to be cautious. Be advised not to flaunt large sums of money or other high value items. Rather make use of your room or the hotel safes.

Time difference

Seychelles is 4 hours ahead of GMT, 3 hours ahead of British summer time and 2 hours ahead of European summer time.

TV, radio and Newspapers

Local TV is broadcast in Creole, French and English with the recent addition of 'TV 5 Afrique' The music radio station 'Paradise FM' broadcasts to Mahé, Praslin, La Digue, Silhouette and the Inner Islands. The Seychelles Nation' is a morning newspaper 'that appears Mon-Sat and is available in English, French and Creole. 'Isola Bella', appears monthly. Political party publications 'The People', 'Regar' and 'Seychelles New Weekly' are published weekly.

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