



Welcome to the Seychelles

WELCOME TO THE SEYCHELLES

One hundred and fifteen coral and granite islands rising up out of the Indian Ocean – this is the Seychelles! A dream come true - calm azure waters, deserted beaches, tropical paradise and turquoise lagoons. This string of islands offers sparkling white sandy beaches and coral reefs bustling with sea life. The flora and fauna are unique, the mountains are covered in lush vegetation, and the landscape offers a stunning and multi-faceted panorama.

HISTORY

The first European to pass through the Seychelles was Portuguese Admiral Vasco da Gama in 1502, followed by the English in 1609. A transit point for trade between Africa and Asia, the islands were used by pirates until 1756, when the French took control, laying down their “Stone of Possession” (visible today at the museum in Mahé) and naming the islands after Jean Moreau de Séchelles. Britain and France fought over the islands from the late 18th to early 19th century, with Britain finally gaining control in 1814. Achieving independence from Britain in 1976, the Seychelles today is a true success story of people who claim origins from all over the world and live together with an unusual and inspiring degree of harmony in diversity.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Seychelles’ 115 islands fall under two distinct groups; the outstandingly beautiful granitic islands, the world’s only oceanic islands of granitic rock and coral islands fringed by white sandy beaches and encircled by coral reefs teeming with fish.

The three most popular islands in the Seychelles archipelago are Mahé, Praslin, and La Digue.

Home to 98% of the Seychelles’ population, these three are clustered in the archipelago’s northeast area known as the Inner Island group. Mahé and Praslin are Seychelles’ largest islands (nearby Silhouette Island is larger than La Digue, but less populated), and all three are granitic (versus coral). The Inner Islands also include other popular islands to visit, such as Denis, Bird, Silhouette, and North.



CLIMATE

Seychelles' enviable climate is always warm and without extremes. In this tropical haven, the temperature seldom drops below 24°C or rises above 32°C making Seychelles a year round destination for sun worshippers and beach lovers. During the north-west trade winds that occur between the October and March, the sea is generally calm and the weather warm and humid, in January and February the islands receive their life-giving rains, rejuvenating the rivers and streams. From May to September the weather is cooler and drier with livelier seas - particularly on the south-eastern coasts.

TIME DIFFERENCE

The Seychelles is 2 hours ahead of South Africa.

CURRENCY

The currency in use is the Seychelles rupee (Rs). Although tourist prices are often quoted in Euros, you can also pay in Rupees and often also in US Dollars. ATMs (which accept foreign cards) are available at the airports, in Victoria, and scattered around the larger towns on all three main islands. Almost all hotels, restaurants, shops, and even small curio stalls take major credit cards, with a preference for Visa and MasterCard.

WHAT TO DO IN THE SEYCHELLES

For visitors who can tear themselves away from their resort, the Seychelles offers a wide variety of things to see and do; from the prehistoric rainforest of Praslin's National Park to the 70 beaches of Mahé and endless water sports. You could take an excursion to Mahe's capital, Victoria, to admire its colonial mansions and meet the giant tortoises at the botanical gardens. You can also visit tiny islands such as beautiful La Digue, perhaps joining local fishermen in their boat for a day's angling in the abundant waters.

You will find proud national monuments, beautiful Creole houses, artists' studios, national reserves and marine parks, as well as breath-taking natural wonders above and beneath the waves. There are guided nature tours to enjoy some of the rarest species of flora and fauna on earth. Not forgetting the mellow Seychelles nightlife where you can take in a casino, some local bars and fine restaurants offering unforgettable Creole and international cuisine.

Mahe

The first port of call for most visitors to the Seychelles is Mahe. This is the largest island of the Seychelles and the largest granitic island – 27 km long and 8 km wide. Forming the backbone of the island is a spectacular mountain range that includes Morne Seychellois, the island's highest peak. Around the peak is one of the island's beautiful national parks, offering good hiking and stunning scenery. More than 60 idyllic beaches fringed with swaying palm trees can be found along the shoreline, offering a host of activities including diving and fishing. There are several interesting sights to see, particularly in friendly Victoria.

Praslin

Praslin is the second largest island of the Seychelles, 44 km north east of Mahe and can be reached by plane or ferry. This island is a popular tourist destination with several hotels and resorts, as well as the famous beaches of Anse Lazio and Anse Georgette. The beautiful Vallee de Mai is known for the unique Coco de Mer.

La Digue

La Digue is a small island accessible by ferry from Praslin. Here cars are shunned in favour of bicycles and ox-carts. A timeless oasis, hidden away in the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean, La Digue is the Seychelles of yesteryear. Home to some of the most beautiful beaches, La Digue also boasts the friendliest people and most tranquil, serene and relaxed atmosphere.

LANGUAGE

Seychellois - the common name used for the population of Seychelles - speak both English and Creole.

ELECTRICITY

Throughout Seychelles the voltage is 220-240 volts AC 50 Hz. Seychelles uses the British standard square three-pin, 13 amp sharp electric plug. International visitors are advised to bring their own adaptors.



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DIVING

Seychelles offers diverse and impressive diving opportunities. The Inner Islands rest on a shallow plateau with prolific marine life and excellent PADI diving facilities are available with access to a multitude of dive sites. The Outer Islands to the south of the archipelago are all coralline or sand cays and mainly uninhabited, presenting the experienced diver with excellent opportunities to explore where few have gone before. If you are a certified diver, travel with proof of certification and discover this miracle of nature.

WHAT TO WEAR

As the Seychelles are warm throughout the year it is recommended that you pack light comfortable relaxed clothing. Most resorts are quite casual, so light clothing should be adequate at most times - you may also want to take a thin rain jacket in the event of the occasional rain shower. Don't forget your beach wear plus sun screen and sun glasses.

WHAT TO PACK

- As a guide, the maximum weight for checked luggage is 20kg in economy class and 30kg in business class
- Your hand-luggage should not weigh more than 6kg and needs to be small and compact
- Take along your best beach and casual wear, perfect for the day
- As the Seychelles are warm throughout the year it is recommended that you pack light comfortable relaxed clothing. Most resorts are quite casual, so light clothing should be adequate at most times
- Sunglasses and suntan lotion are a must
- Don't forget any medication that you might need, and be sure to pack it in your hand luggage
- Chargers for all your devices (it's a good idea to take along a few movies on a tablet or something similar as the English TV channels in your hotel may be limited)
- Sturdy walking shoes if you are planning on taking a guided walk or exploring nature trails
- Mosquito repellent
- A sun hat, flip flops and a beach bag

DID YOU KNOW

- Victoria is the smallest capital in the world
- Almost 50% of the Seychelles is dedicated to national parks and reserves
- The Coco de Mer is the world heaviest nut and endemic to Seychelles
- The islands were once popular hideouts for pirates and legend has some treasures are still to be found

TRAVEL TIPS

- Pack a change of clothing in your hand luggage in case of baggage delays (and a spare cozzie so at least you can have a swim when you get to your resort)
- Clothing creases less if rolled in a sausage shape when packed – so roll, don't fold
- No sharp objects are permitted in your hand luggage (yes, tweezers are sharp!)
- Travel insurance is a must. If you can't afford it, you can't afford to travel!
- Travelling with kids – please check that you have all the relevant documents including unabridged Birth Certificates.
- Put electronics, medication, toothbrushes and jewellery in your carry-on bag
- It's often a good idea to let your bank or credit card company know that you're going overseas
- Be patient, be flexible, be spontaneous and have the best time ever!



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