

## Seychelles Islands – Travel Guide



Landscape from the tropical paradise called Seychelles Islands

The Seychelles is a group of about 115 islands which lie 1600 km off the coast of East Africa. These islands fall into two distinct groups. Inner Islands of Mahe, Praslin, La Digue, and Anonyme, fall within the relatively shallow Seychelles plateau, four degrees South of the Equator. The Outer Islands are further divided into five groups: The Amirantes Group lies 230 km distant from Mahe, The Southern Coral Group, Alphonse Group, Farquhar Group, and the Aldabra Group. It is a beautiful tourist destination.

Seychelles enjoys a tropical climate all through the year. When the North West trade winds blow between the months of October and March, the sea is generally calm and the weather is warm and humid.

The Seychelles is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean and Mahé is the principal island consisting of an area of 142 sq km along with the islands of Praslin, La Digue, and Silhouette. Mahe is situated about 1,600 km off the east coast of Africa. It would be a delight for the tourists to know that the Seychelles Islands are the highest point of the Mascarene Ridge, which is an Indian Ocean ridge running in a generally north-south direction. Rugged crests, towering cliffs, boulders, and domes contribute to its great natural elegance. In between the rock relief are pockets of laterite soil of a very thin nature, which can be easily eroded.

Mahé is full of white sandy beaches filled with corals and shells known locally as plateaus though they rarely achieve a height of more than 10 ft above sea level. The coralline Seychelles is on the other hand low-lying, rising only a few feet above the surface of the sea. Seychelles is a land of fine beaches, turquoise seas, and warm weather, which attracts visitors to a great level. Seychelles is also a place rich in rare plants which flourish nowhere else on the planet. There are around 81 species of rare plants that belong to the tropical forests. Among these the coco-de-mer (sea coconut), native to Praslin, which grow in the Vallée de Mai is worth watching.

The Seychelles, besides being a natural beauty is a major attraction for birdwatchers. Mainly terns nest on these islands and the fairy tern is the best. As more island sanctuaries and nature reserves were set up, much has been done to make the Seychelles a paradise for birds and for those tourists who would love to watch them.

### **Getting In**

Seychelles is an enchanting tourist destination often visited by tourists. The only option for most tourists, trying to reach Seychelles is by air.

The national airlines of Seychelles, Air Seychelles, founded in the year 1977, operates flights from international locations in Asia, Africa, and Europe. The same airlines would help you in getting around the Seychelles. The African locations from where Air Seychelles operates are Johannesburg and Port Louis. The Asian destinations of the national airlines of Seychelles include Male and Singapore. The European locations, from where reaching the Seychelles is possible, are Frankfurt, London, Paris, and Rome.

The tourists arriving in the Seychelles, by the national airlines of the country or by any other airlines, are likely to land at the Seychelles International Airport, which is located in the island of Mahe. Other airports of the Seychelles include the Praslin island airport, the Bird Island Airport, the Desroches Airport, and the Fregate Island Airport. The national airlines of Seychelles operate flights to all the mentioned airports in the Seychelles.

The frequent flyer program of the national airlines of the country is the Seychelles Plus. You need to be at least 12 years of age to be eligible for the Seychelles Plus program. Those who want to holiday in the Seychelles, quite regularly; it is advisable to become a member of this program. The foreign airlines, which you could avail of, for reaching Seychelles are listed below:

- Air Austral
- Air Mauritius
- Condor Airlines
- Emirates

- Kenya Airways
- Qatar Airways

### **Transport**

The different modes of getting around in Seychelles are listed below:

#### **Planes**

The national airlines of Seychelles, Air Seychelles makes getting around in Seychelles as smooth and comfortable as possible. The national airlines of Seychelles connect most parts of the country by air. Some of the domestic destinations of Air Seychelles include Mahe, Bird, Denis, Fregate, Desroches, and Alphonse.

#### **Helicopters**

The company Helicopters Seychelles would take care of your needs of traveling in Seychelles. The company operates flights to the islands of Mahe, Praslin, La Digue, etc. The helicopter rides would no doubt provide you with the best view of Seychelles from the air.

#### **Cars**

Cars are also a good option to travel in Seychelles. Mahe and Praslin are the two places in Seychelles where you can obtain a car on rental basis. The rent for hiring a car for a single day is not too much. During the peak season, you would find it difficult to hire a car. You need to be at least 21 years of age, to be able to rent a car in Seychelles. Taxis are also available in large numbers in the country. Again, Mahe and Praslin are the areas in Seychelles where the taxis are available. Remember that vehicles are driven on the left side of the street in Seychelles.

#### **Boat**

Ferries connect the islands of Praslin and Mahe in Seychelles. The journey would not take more than an hour. Schooners are also available which connect the islands of Praslin and La Digue. Ferries can also be availed of to get to La Digue from Mahe. This particular journey would take you about three hours. The Windward Islands is a very popular yacht charter company which, apart from the Seychelles, operate in other countries like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, etc.

#### **Bus**

The SPTC (Seychelles Public Transport Corporation) connects the islands of Praslin and Mahe by bus. The buses are available at regular intervals of 15 minutes and ply from morning till evening.

Out of the modes of getting around in Seychelles mentioned, the planes are the fastest and the most convenient. Driving a car would give you the independence of deciding where to go and when to stop. If you travel by bus, you are likely to see many places in Seychelles, where you might feel like breaking your journey and spending a few quiet minutes. This is possible only if you travel by car. You can stop at a place you like and then continue your journey. The helicopters and the boat rides would show you the best of the country of Seychelles.

### **Leisure**

The numerous beaches in Seychelles make the land a tourist's paradise. The island of Mahe itself boasts of about 70 beaches. The amazing diversity of plant life in Seychelles would also prove very interesting for the tourists to study. The coco de mer palm trees with its 18 kg fruits amaze many visitors of Seychelles.

You could also try out water sports like water skiing, sailing, fishing, scuba-diving, etc. The island of Desroches in Seychelles is perfect for the activities mentioned. The best time of the year for snorkeling in the Seychelles is during the months of April, May, October, and November. The underwater life in Seychelles is amazing to behold. The St. Anne National Marine Park is one place in the Seychelles where you can try out snorkeling. Do not forget to take some photos while you are underwater in Seychelles. Visit the country during the time of the SUBIOS underwater festival, which lasts for a period of three weeks. Over 100 species of corals and more than 900 species of fish attract marine professionals from all parts of the world.

Dining in the Seychelles is as good an experience as in any other part of the world. The international restaurants present in the Seychelles have on their menu, most cuisines of the world, including traditional Seychelles cuisine. The food and drinks of Seychelles would prove very enjoyable for you. The active nightlife of Seychelles makes you get the most out of your tour to the Seychelles. The hotels in Seychelles would take care of your evening entertainment with music and dances. The Beau Vallon Bay Hotel and the Plantation Club are the two places in Seychelles, which offer casinos for their guests. Shopping is also a way of passing your time of entertainment and leisure in Seychelles. You can purchase handicraft items from the many of the stores located in the country, selling the same. The handicrafts, which you can buy include articles of textile, wood, jewelry, pottery, etc. The major shops in Seychelles accept credit cards as mode of payment. The tea is a popular beverage in the country and can also be purchased from the shops in Seychelles.

The tourists in Seychelles can also visit the following places of interest:

- Victoria
- Seychelles Natural History Museum
- National Museum of History
- National Botanical Gardens
- St. Anne Marine National Park
- Vallee de Mai
- Black Pearl Ltd
- Beau Vallon Bay
- George Camille Gallery

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