



# Seychelles

Located in the heart of the Indian Ocean, the beautiful Seychelles is often touted as one of the most romantic destinations in the world. The archipelago casts a spell over travellers, thanks to its crystalline turquoise waters, pristine coral reefs and powdery beaches, which encircle vast granite pinnacles and verdant rainforest.

The islands are stretched across nearly one million square kilometres of ocean off the coast of East Africa. Only a few of the 115 islands are inhabited, with most of the local population (known as Seychellois) gathered on the main island, Mahe, around the capital city of Victoria.

The Seychellois population comprises an eclectic mix of the descendants of freed African slaves, Arab, Indian and Chinese traders, British and French settlers and Creole seafarers. The multi-party democratic republic was once a thriving pirate's haven, but today it serves as a refuge for sun seekers, honeymooners and nature lovers, who congregate in the top quality hotels and resorts on the shores of the main islands. Travellers will find gorgeous beaches, luxury accommodation, cultural attractions, and a variety of activities on Mahe, Praslin and La Digue, though Mahe is best for those who want world-class snorkelling and good restaurants. La Digue is perfect for visitors who wish to be completely surrounded by nature.

Whether travellers come to soak up the equatorial sun on silver sands, dive among more than 800 species of fish in the island waters, marvel at flocks of colourful birds flitting between rare jungle trees, or to cement their marriage vows, they will find the Seychelles archipelago undeniably idyllic.

Although primarily enjoyed as an uber lavish destination, there is an increasing drive to develop the budget tourism options on the islands, opening the doors of paradise to travellers who may previously only have dreamt of a holiday on these exotic shores.

## Things to do in Seychelles

Almost half of the total land area of the Seychelles is protected and most of its islands are designated marine sanctuaries, which goes some way to explaining why the archipelago is so pristine and well preserved. Naturally, the Seychelles is a dream destination for aquatic pursuits such as diving,

snorkelling, sailing and fishing, but visitors will also find that the virgin jungles and granite peaks provide a playground for hikers, bird watchers and rock climbers.

The islands of Mahe, Praslin and La Digue are the most developed for tourists, with many luxury hotels, some cultural attractions, and myriad activities on offer. Here, travellers will find stunning beaches, the Morne Seychellois National Park and the UNESCO-listed Vallee de Mai.

Keen fishermen should head to Desroches Island, Alphonse Island and Farquhar Atoll, while surfers will love Anse Intendance. Some of the best islands for birders include the aptly named Bird Island, the Aride Island Nature Reserve and Cousin Island. Nature lovers will also relish the wildlife on Curieuse Island, Silhouette Island and the UNESCO-listed Aldabra Atoll, to name just a few.

## Seychelles travel info

### Electricity

Electrical current is 220-240 volts, 50Hz. Plugs are of the British type, with three flat pins.

### Language

Creole, English and French are all spoken in the Seychelles.

### Money

The Seychelles currency is the rupee (SCR), which is divided into 100 cents. It's uncommon to buy goods or pay for services in any other currency, though some guesthouses and hotels may accept euros or US dollars. Credit cards are widely welcomed throughout the Seychelles, and ATMs are available at major banks in Victoria and Praslin. Money can be exchanged at travel agents, banks and bureau de changes.

### Tipping

Tipping generally isn't practiced and is never expected in the Seychelles, though top-end hotels or restaurants will sometimes add a service charge of 10 to 15 percent to the bill.

### Health

Health regulations in the Seychelles require that travellers who arrive from or have transited through areas where there is a risk of yellow fever transmission have a vaccination certificate. All eligible travellers should be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines; immunisation against hepatitis A, hepatitis B and typhoid are recommended. Visitors are advised to bring their own medication to avert the risk of travellers' diarrhoea, as well as sun block and insect repellent, as local supplies can be erratic and costly. During the rainy season in particular, visitors should take precautions against mosquito bites due to the risk of dengue fever and the chikungunya virus (although these diseases are rare in Seychelles). Tap water meets WHO standards, but most visitors prefer to drink bottled water, which is widely available. Medical facilities on the more remote islands are limited or non-existent, but visitors will find a government hospital and several private clinics in Victoria. Medical insurance with full evacuation cover is necessary.

## Safety

Safety is not generally an issue in the Seychelles; violent crime is unlikely and most visits are trouble free. There have been some incidents of theft and assault, but these are targeted mainly at residents. Visitors should be vigilant, particularly after dark in Victoria and in isolated areas, and should avoid taking valuables to the beach, where petty thieves might snatch them. Women should avoid walking alone on isolated beaches.

## Local customs

Seychellois are usually described as laid-back and easygoing, and dress codes around the destination are generally relaxed. Nudism is unacceptable, however, and topless bathing is tolerated on very few beaches. Punishments for drug offences can be severe.

## Doing business

In the Seychelles, business is conducted relatively informally. Men and women are not required to wear formal suits, although a smart appearance is advised. Business is usually conducted in English or French. Business hours are generally 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

## Duty free

Travellers to the Seychelles over 18 years do not have to pay duty on 200 cigarettes, or 250g of tobacco; two litres of spirits and two litres of wine; 200ml of perfume or eau de toilette. Prohibited items include drugs, narcotics, firearms, spear-fishing equipment, and camouflage clothing.

## Communications

The international dialling code for Seychelles is +248. The outgoing code is 00 followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0044 for the United Kingdom). Visitors can purchase local SIM cards for their mobile phones and many midrange and all top-end hotels offer WiFi, as do some cafes and restaurants.

## Passport & Visa

No foreigners require a visa to enter Seychelles. A visitor's permit, valid for a maximum of three months, is issued on arrival and may be extended on application for up to three months. All visitors do, however, require a passport valid for the duration of their visit, a return or onward ticket, sufficient funds to cover their stay (a minimum of USD 150 per day), and proof of accommodation. Extensions are possible if applied for at least a week before expiry of visitor's permit. It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

## Entry requirements

United States citizens require a passport valid for at least the length of their stay and will be issued with a visitor's permit on arrival, valid for three months. A visa is required.

British citizens need a passport valid for the duration of their stay, and will be issued with a visitor's permit on arrival, valid for three months. A visa is required.

Canadians require a passport valid for at least the length of their stay and will be issued with a visitor's permit on arrival, valid for three months. A visa is required.

Australians need a passport valid for the length of their stay and will be issued with a visitor's permit on arrival, valid for three months. A visa is required.

South Africans must have a passport valid for the duration of their stay and will be issued with a visitor's permit on arrival, valid for three months. A visa is required.

Irish citizens require a passport valid for the length of their stay and will be issued with a visitor's permit on arrival, valid for three months. A visa is required.

New Zealand citizens require a passport valid for the length of their stay and will be issued with a visitor's permit on arrival, valid for three months. A visa is required.

## Useful contacts

Seychelles Tourist Office, Mahe: [www.seychelles.travel/en/](http://www.seychelles.travel/en/)

999 (police and rescue services); 151 (medical emergency).

## Embassies / consulates in other countries

Seychelles Embassy, New York, United States: +1 212 972 1785.

Seychelles High Commission in London, United Kingdom: +44 20 7245 0680.

Seychelles Consulate, Montreal, Canada: +1 514 284 9329

Consulate General of the Republic of Seychelles, Melbourne, Australia: +61 (3) 9796 9412.

Seychelles Consulate, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 12 348 0270.

Consulate of the Republic of Seychelles, Dublin, Ireland: +353 87 66 22 675

## Embassies / consulates in Seychelles

United States Consulate, Port Louis, Mauritius (also responsible for Seychelles): +230 202 4400.

British High Commission, Victoria: +248 428 3666.

Canadian High Commission, Port Louis, Mauritius (also responsible for Seychelles): +230 202 0160.

Australian High Commission, Port Louis, Mauritius (also responsible for Seychelles): +230 202 0160.

South African Commission, Port Louis, Mauritius (also responsible for Seychelles): +230 212 6925.

## Climate in Seychelles

Seychelles is constantly hot and humid, with an average annual temperature of 84F (29C), and a similar average sea temperature, which seldom drops below 81F (27C). The heat is usually pleasantly tempered by sea breezes. The islands lie outside of the hurricane belt, so storms are rare, but tropical rains fall

during January and February. It is easy to escape the showers, though, because it can be sunny on one side of an island while it rains on the other.

The Seychelles is a glorious holiday destination at any time of year, but the best time to visit depends on the desired activities. For instance, it is slightly windier between May and September, making this the ideal time to visit for those wanting to sail or enjoy other wind-based sports; whereas the best time of year for scuba diving and snorkelling is April and May or October and November, when the visibility is at its best.

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**Disclaimer:** By its very nature much of the information in this travel guide is subject to change at short notice and travellers are urged to verify information on which they're relying with the relevant authorities. We cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or inconvenience to any person as a result of information contained above.

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