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# INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA)

*Travel with IORA: Discovering the countries, cultures and cuisines of the Indian Ocean Region.*

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# Message from the Secretary-General of IORA

Dear Readers,

It gives me the greatest pleasure to introduce to you the first edition of the quarterly IORA Tourism Newsletter. This is one of the outcomes of the Second IORA Tourism Ministerial Meeting and the launch of the IORA Core Group on Tourism in October 2018. This is hoped that it will prove as a major step for enhancing tourism cooperation in the Association. The Core Group has adopted a comprehensive work plan to guide its activities in strengthening cooperation in the tourism sector amongst Member States, and the publication of an IORA Tourism Newsletter is one of the important tools to communicate with our Member States and beyond.

IORA Member States are blessed with a great diversity of tourism assets that are the basis for a successful and sustainable tourism industry. This industry is very important in meeting some of the relevant sustainable development goals in the Region. The growth of tourism is closely associated with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1, 2, 5 and 8. SDG Goal 8 is to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.9 is to "devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products". The importance of sustainable tourism, as a driver for jobs creation and the promotion of local culture and products, is also highlighted in Sustainable Development Goal target 12.b. Tourism is also identified as one of the tools to "increase (by 2030) the economic benefits to Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries" (LDCs), through Sustainable Development Goals Target 14.7.

Out of the total 1121 UNESCO World Heritage Sites listed, 158 World Heritage Sites are found in the Indian Ocean Rim region. This accounts for 14% of the total of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Presently, two marine World Heritage sites are located in the Indian Ocean region namely, the iSimangaliso Wetland Park in South Africa, listed in 1999, and Aldabra Atoll in Seychelles, listed in 1982.

The Indian Ocean prides itself with precious, clear beaches, turquoise waters stunning islands and marvellous scenery, being frequently considered one of the most appealing marine destinations on Earth. Thus, making it



extremely popular among honeymooners, because of its breath-taking islands scattered throughout the Indian ocean. It boasts of white powdery sands, incredible clear water, stunning landscapes with plenty of unique activities.

According to the UN WTO Report 2018, the world tourism arrivals were 1.4 billion, out of which IORA had a share of 140 million annually representing approx. 1.2 % of total world tourists' arrivals. Therefore, it is pertinent for the Member States of IORA to focus on Tourism as a source of inclusive and sustainable development in the Indian Ocean region.

With reference to the IORA Tourism Newsletter, the Secretariat has received inputs from six countries namely, Australia, Iran, Mauritius, Seychelles, Singapore and Somalia. Subsequent editions will include segments such as regional cuisine, attractions, the discovery of arts & culture in the region, 'slice of life' stories, the beautiful cities where IORA meetings are held and many more exciting updates. We would also use the newsletter to keep readers posted on the work of the Core Group and its activities.

I also use this opportunity to thank those Member States who have contributed to this first edition. If you have ideas on what you would like to see included in the newsletter, we are open to any suggestions that will enhance this newsletter!

Let's explore the Indian Ocean region tourism and culture together!

Kind Regards,  
H.E. Dr N N Nokwe

# OVERVIEW OF AUSTRALIA

## Snapshot of Australia

### Full Title

Commonwealth of Australia

### Population

25.10 million (September 2018)

### Capital City

Canberra

### Largest City

Sydney, Population of Greater Sydney 5.2 million (June 2018)

### Surface Area

7.69 million sq kms (2.96 million sq miles)

### Main Language

English + more than 300 others

### Currency

Australian dollar (AUD)

## Country Profile

Australia is a stable, democratic and culturally diverse nation with a highly skilled workforce and one of the strongest performing economies in the world.

With spectacular landscapes and a rich ancient culture, Australia is a land like no other. It is the earth's sixth-largest country in land area and is the only nation to govern an entire continent.

Australia is home to one of the world's oldest living cultures, with Aboriginal communities established nearly 60,000 years before European settlement. Today, Australia is one of the world's most multicultural countries, rich in Indigenous and immigrant cultures.

## Key Attractions in Australia

**The Great Barrier Reef:** The Great Barrier Reef makes up about 10 per cent of the world's coral reef ecosystems and is one of the best-known and most complex natural systems on Earth. The Reef is a Marine Park and World Heritage Area, supporting a range of commercial activities and attracting millions of visitors each year who come to enjoy its beauty above and below the water. The Great Barrier Reef is an economic powerhouse, contributing more than \$5.6 billion each year to the Australian economy and around 70,000 jobs.



**The Red Centre:** The Red Centre is an extraordinary landscape of desert plains, weathered mountain ranges, rocky gorges and some of Aboriginal Australia's most sacred sites, including Uluru and Kata Tjuta. Floating in an out-back waterhole, dining under a starry sky while being serenaded by didgeridoo and watching the world's most famous rock change colours at dawn and dusk are just some of the Red Centre's only-in-Australia experiences.



# OVERVIEW OF AUSTRALIA

**Great Ocean Road:** The Great Ocean Road is one of the world's most scenic coastal drives, along the south-west coast of Victoria. The Great Ocean Road begins a 90-minute drive from Melbourne's city centre. It spans 400 kilometres (249 miles) from the town of Torquay to Nelson on the South Australian border and is home to the world-class surf at Bells Beach and the craggy limestone spires of the 12 Apostles.



**Kangaroo Island:** Kangaroo Island, 3 kilometres (8 miles) off the coast of South Australia and 30 minutes by plane from Adelaide, is brimming with native animals, some of which aren't found anywhere else. It is also home to an established artisanal food scene, and one of the world's best hotels. More than one third of the island is protected by conservation areas and national parks, while lush farmland and small towns make up much of the rest. The island, known to the locals as "KI", is divided into seven regions, with four major towns: Kingscote (the island's relaxed capital), Penneshaw (where daily ferries disembark), American River, and Parndana.

**The Blue Mountains:** With a blue horizon of eucalyptus trees that appear to stretch on forever, expect to be enchanted by the natural beauty of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area. Set out on foot to explore some of the 140 kilometres (87 miles) of walking tracks, admire the native bushland, marvel at the impressive rock formations and explore underground caves on a holiday centred around the outdoors. Listen to Dreaming stories told by local Aboriginal guides and admire the work of resident artists before retiring to a luxury retreat surrounded by wilderness.



**The Sunshine Coast:** Stretching from the coastal city of Caloundra, near Brisbane, to the Great Sandy National Park in the north, the Sunshine Coast is home to pretty villages, renowned surf spots and spectacular rural hinterland. Surrounded by beach, Noosa is a holiday hotspot near the centre of the Sunshine Coast, with many fashion boutiques and hip cafés dotted along Hastings Street. Surfers and golfers will love the holiday town of Coolum, while lush Eumundi in the Noosa hinterland will satisfy market shoppers and art lovers with its famous Eumundi Mar-

kets. Maroochydore is the cultural capital of the region but, is pleasingly far from being a bustling city. From the Sunshine Coast you can catch a car ferry from the village of Tewantin and explore the Noosa North Shore, the Great Sandy National Park and World Heritage-listed Fraser Island.

# IRAN-LAND OF FOUR SEASONS

## Overview

Iran as a vast country with 1.648 million sq km total area is located in the south west of Asia and the border countries are: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and from the south bordering the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf.

## Historical Attractions

The Iranian Plateau is recognised as one of the oldest civilisations during ancient period in Asia and is well-considered in the archeology. According to some proofs, Iran has been inhabited for many years. The existence of central residential alongside the rivers and fountains, such as: Tepe Sialk in Kashan, Tepe Hesar in Damghan, Torang Tepe in Gorgan, Tepe Hasanlou in Azarbaijan, Tepe Marlik in Roudbar in addition to 23 World Heritage sites inscribed on UNESCO World Heritage List testify the antiquity of the history of Iran.

IRAN with 23 cultural heritage sites is one of the 10 countries with the most Cultural Heritage Sites in the UNESCO's World Heritage list.

23 world heritage sites in Iran have already been registered in the UNESCO's list of World Heritage: Armenian Monastic Ensembles of Iran, Bam and its Cultural Landscape, Bisotun, Cultural Landscape of Maymand, Golestan Palace, Gonbad-e Qabus, Masjed-e Jame of Isfahan, Meidan-e Emam, Pasargadae , Persepolis , Shahr-i Sokhta, Sheikh Safi al-din Khanegah and Shrine Ensemble in Ardabil, Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System, Soltaniyeh Dome, Susa, Tabriz Historic Bazaar Complex, Takht-e Soleyman, Tchogha Zanbil, The Persian Qanat, Lut desert, The Persian Garden, Sassanid Archeological Landscape of Fars Region as well as Historic City of Yazd.



## Religious Attractions

Ancient Persia is the origin of "Zoroastrians" as one of the most significant religions. The Official religion of Iran is Islam with 99/56 of the population and majority of them are Shia. Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism are also officially recognised with equal civil, political and economic rights. One of the main purposes of travel to Iran is pilgrimage. The major pilgrimage destinations in Iran are: Holy shrine Complex in Mashad, Fatima Masumeh Holy Shrine in Qom, Shah Cheragh Holy Shrine, Tomb of Daniel the Prophet in Susa. Ta'zieh rituals and Qalishuyan in Ardehal Rituals inscribed on UNESCO Cultural Heritage List are other religious attractions.



# IRAN-LAND OF FOUR SEASONS

## *Cultural Attractions and Museums*

Iran's cultural richness in different areas comprising eastern art, literature and mysticism are internationally reputed. Myths, legends, wisdom and philosophy, poetry, music, folk literature, handicrafts, architecture and decorative arts are the treasures of this fabulous land. Nowrouz, Radif of Iranian music, Folk music of Bakhshis in Khorasan province, Ta'zieh rituals, Zurkhaneh and heroism ceremonies, skill of carpet weaving, storytelling and narration, traditional know-how of dhow building, maritime in Persian Gulf, and Qalishuyan in Ardehal Rituals can be considered as Iranian intangible heritage which are inscribed on UNESCO heritage list.



Iranian museums are treasures for cultural, historical, natural, anthropological and artistic heritage. There are lots of museums, palace museums, garden museums and private collections in most major and old cities of Iran which are exhibiting ancient, natural and artistic works of this ancient country. The number of museums in Iran exceeds to 430 of which the most remarkable are as follows: Museum of Tabriz, Maragheh, Urumieh, Khoy, Miandoab in Azerbaijan Province; Chehel-Sotoun and Kashan Museums in Isfahan Province, Kermanshah Museum; in Tehran Reza Abbasi, Carpet, Contemporary Art, Glassware, Clock, Cinema, National Jewelleries, National Arts Museums and Iran National Museum, etc. Tous, Naderi, Astan Quds Razavi Museums in Khorasan Razavi province; Susa, Haft Teppe in Khuzestan province, Falak-ol-Aflak in Lorestan.

## *Natural Attractions*

Iran is the land of four seasons in which you can find all kind of weathers simultaneously. Due to the diversity of climate and geographic situation, during the winter in some cities the weather seems summertime while several cities during the summer enjoy mild weather in spring. More than 8000 plants species, 168 mammal species, 520 bird species, 174 fish species, 433 butterfly species and around 25000 insect species have been recognised. More than 500 springs with intact areas, dozens of waterfalls, wild rivers with eye-catching sceneries, natural lakes, ever-green woodlands and pleasant natural aroma of mountain bushes are other dimension of miraculous nature of this country. Damavand Mount, the humid forest in the north of the country, central desert, Lout Desert, Golestan National Park, Mian kaleh Pond, Touran Biosphere Reserve, can be referred to as other Iranian natural precious attractions. It is considerable that rare species of wildlife such as Asian Leopard and Pleske's ground jay or Persian ground jay are endemic to Iran.

## *Sports Attraction*

Among all eastern countries, Iran has been one of the most active countries in sport and physical education particularly archery and horse-riding. Pahlevani and zoorkhaneh rituals which means "heroic sport", is a kind of ancient Iranian sport and the place dedicated to it is called the Zurkhaneh literally the "house of strength". This kind of sport as a symbol of heroism is still common in Iran and inscribed on UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

Different kinds of sports such as wrestling, soccer, volleyball, handball, tennis are popular in Iran and most of the cities are equipped with required facilities and services. It is considerable that skiing on snow, water and grass and adventurous sports can be considered as common sport attractions.



# IRAN-LAND OF FOUR SEASONS

## *Health Tourism*

Iran is potent enough to be known as a destination for health tourism. The existence of different mineral springs has paved the way to develop Hydrotherapy centres in Iran. The Spa centres in Sareyn in Ardebil and Larijan in Mazandaran Province are the most famous ones. Furthermore, mud therapy in Uramieh and sand, salt therapy in the deserts are other natural remedies in Iran. Iran is also famous for its traditional medicine. Recreational centres located in Alborz and Zagros mountain areas with pleasant weather provide visitors with health service. In the field of medical tourism Iran enjoys considerable potentials in stem cells, spinal injuries infertility, kidney and liver transplant, ophthalmology and radiology in addition to affordable cost and efficiency in specialised surgeries, prove the competency of Iran to develop its health tourism. Considering the current conditions in daily routine lives of people with exhaustion, health tourism can offer a good opportunity to the ones who are looking for therapy and relaxation and Iran with its well-equipped spa centres can be a good choice to be mentioned.



## *Hospitality*

One the most impressive elements which would make trips to Iran very extraordinary and delightful is being welcome and served by the hospitable Iranians. The etiquettes and behaviours towards travellers by Iranians rooted in their cultural beliefs make the journey memorable and encourage tourist to repeat their experiences.

## *Iranian Souvenirs and Handicrafts*

There is a wide range of souvenirs in Iran which can meet all expectations considering all tastes and affordability. Carpets, rugs, silverworks, marquetry and wood carvings in Isfahan; Qashqai carpets and weavings and in Shiraz; carpets, rugs, Kilim and various type of nuts in Tabriz; Carpets and pistachio in Kerman; Saffron in Mashad and any kind of souvenirs would be available in Tehran.

The Iranian handicrafts are the manifestation of art, culture and ancient civilisation which overwhelms any visitor by its delicate design. The rich millennial Persian civilisation astonishes tourists and persuades them to take a piece of this historical land as a memorable souvenir. The most significant and well-known Iranian handicraft is carpet and Kilim. The Persian carpet with its design, textures and permanent colour has privilege worldwide. More than 229 handicrafts have been recognised in Iran of which Persian carpet-weaving of Fars province and designs and patterns of carpets of Kashan have been inscribed in UNESCO list. Other remarkable types of Iranian Handicrafts are Brocade, Vitreous enamel, Velvet weaving, Pottery and Ceramics.



## *Iranian Cuisine*

There are over 400 different kinds of food and sweets in Iran. The ingredients are generally cereals, grains, vegetables and proteins. The existence of various tribes within Iran alongside its rich culture has made the Iranian cuisine very diversified. Most popular and famous foods in Iran are: AabGousht, Ghormesabzi and many types of Kebabs. Sweets covered with nuts are popular in Iran.

# OVERVIEW OF MAURITIUS

**Climate** – Average summer temperature: 24.7o C; mean winter temperature 20.4 o C

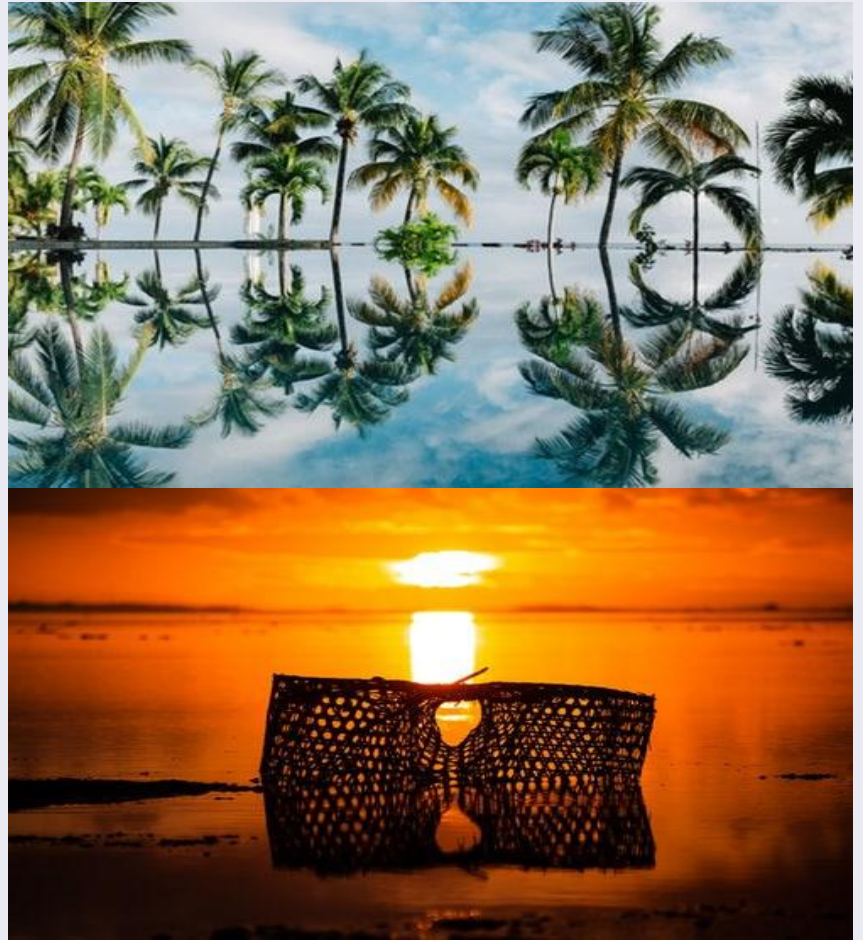
**Capital City** – Port Louis

**Official Language** – English

**Other spoken languages** – Creole, French, ancestral languages (Hindi, Mandarin, etc.)

**Time Zone** – GMT +4 (+5 during northern hemisphere summer time)

**Passport/Visa** – Immigration formalities require that foreign visitors present a return ticket as well as a passport valid for 6 months beyond due date of departure from Mauritius.



## Overview

The volcanic peaks and crystalline beaches of Mauritius, as well as its vibrant culture and the welcoming people that comprise it, are truly products of the world. Discovered by the Portuguese in the 16th century, before being colonised by Dutch, British, and French settlers, Mauritius claimed independence in 1968 but not without bringing its African, Indian, Chinese, and Muslim influences and ethnicities along for the ride. Today Mauritius is a seamless blend of cultures, combining a stable political environment with modern luxury, adventure, and beautifully balmy temperatures: A mid-80s average in the summer (28 °C, from September to December), and a mid-70s average in the winter (23°C, July and August).

## Lap of Luxury

However secluded, Mauritius has long specialised in catering to travellers who want to veer from the usual jet-set destinations without sacrificing luxury accommodations and the boundless hospitality that accompany them. Thankfully for such travellers, Mauritius, an island of less than 800 square miles, boasts one of the most memorable concentrations of lavish stays on earth. Villas perch on lagoons and bungalows dip their toes into the sea while the world's most revered luxury brands pamper you with every amenity imaginable. In-suite spas renew with Afro-Indian treatments, sunset dinners enchant, and Mauritius's charm is placed centre-stage, undiluted and ready to be enjoyed in its purest form.



# JEONJE SITES IN MAURITIUS



## *Pamplemousses Botanical Garden*

The Pamplemousses garden is known by botanists from around the world for the large collection of indigenous and exotic plants that grow there, including the giant *Victoria Amazonica* water lilies and the numerous species of palm trees. The talipot or coryphe parasol is of particular interest: the legend says that it flourishes only once every fifty-seventy years then dies.

## *Chateau de Labourdonnais*

Dating from 1859, this family home embodies the concept of “a castle at the heart of nature”. It is an invitation to discover 19th century art of living in Mauritius, reconciling history, culture, flowers and fruit trees, gastronomy and Mauritian know-how against the agricultural roots of the domain within which it is planted. Above 50 hectares of land are still under cultivation, producing a variety of tropical fruits such as citrus, papaya, passion fruit etc.



## *Chamarel*

Chamarel is a village in the southwest of Mauritius with a population of 700. It is named after the Frenchman Charles Antoine de Chazal de Chamarel, who lived in the area around 1800. Chamarel is primarily known for its scenic locations and nature attractions in its neighbourhood.

## *Macondé*

Offering a beautiful coastal scenery, Macondé expresses the wild character and contrasts of the southern part of Mauritius with its winding road snakes. From this rocky outcrop located along Baie du Cap, visitors can enjoy a stunning view of this reef-free stretch of coastline. Historians believe the area was named after it served as a shelter for runaway slaves coming from the Makonde tribe in Mozambique. There lies also the monument of famous Captain Matthew Flinders, the English navigator and cartographer. Many visitors enjoy climbing up the stairs embedded in the Macondé rock and admiring the impressive view over the ocean and nearby coastal village.



# JEONJE SITES IN MAURITIUS



## *La Vallée des Couleurs Nature Park*

Since the 23-coloured earth was discovered on the 4th of July 1998, «La Vallée des Couleurs Nature Park» has become a famous and unique attraction of the island, which fascinates Mauritians as well as foreigners. The main attraction is the fascinating 23-coloured earth whose origin dates back to millions of years following the eruption of the Bassin Blanc volcano – its ashes, which bear witness to that event, are unique in the world.

## *Ile aux Cerfs*

Iconic Ile aux Cerfs is a beautiful island where visitors can relax on the dazzling ivory beaches, have lunch at restaurants, have fun with kids at the tortoise farm or even have a game of golf at the extraordinary 18-hole golf course occupying the other side of the island, and one of the best Mauritius has to offer.



## *La Vallée de Ferney*

La Vallée de Ferney, one of the last nature havens of the island, is a declared 200 hectares sanctuary for a variety of rare and threatened indigenous species of fauna and flora. Ferney valley is a reference as an eco-touristic site actively working in parallel at conserving and restoring the original fauna and flora of the island. A visit to this site means a concrete contribution towards supporting the ambitious project of saving the biodiversity of the island which is, unfortunately, one of the most threatened today across the world.

## *The Waterfall on Grand River South East*

Besides Ile aux Cerfs, the second most popular attraction on the south-east coast of Mauritius is the Grand River South East waterfall. There are several boats, on a daily basis that offer a trip along the coast and upstream the Grand River, where you can get an incredible view of the falls. The waterfall is surrounded by dense vegetation.



# JEONJE SITES IN MAURITIUS



## ***Le Morne Brabant***

Le Morne Brabant is one of the most spectacular peaks of Mauritius. Classified as a UNESCO World Heritage site for its historical value, the mount offers exhilarating climbing on its steepest sides as well as more recent hiking tracks going by the most accessible parts. At the summit, one is at a loss for words – the view leaves more breathless than the road up ever could.

## ***Black River National Park***

The first national park of Mauritius was established with the view to preserve the last remaining endemic forest of the island. Inaugurated and opened to visitors in the 1990's, it includes the Macchabée forest, Combo and Bel Ombre's natural reserves. Still standing there is the rare ebony tree, sought for and plundered by constructors of seafaring war crafts as the hardest wood available, during the expansion era of maritime navigation. The park also offers several hiking and trekking tracks of different distance and difficulty level, which can be covered in a few hours.



## ***Trou aux Cerfs Crater & Viewpoint***

The 80-metre deep Trou aux Cerfs crater is easily accessible on foot and by car. It is a must-do when shopping in Curepipe or Floréal; the panoramic viewpoints it offers all round its 300 metres diameter set amidst lush greenery is well worth a stop.

## ***Champ de Mars***

Horse racing is very popular in Mauritius and take over the weekends of many 'racegoers'. The Racecourse was inaugurated on 25 June 1812 by The Mauritius Turf Club (MTC) which was founded by Edward Alured Draper thus heralding 200 years of competition. Champ de Mars racecourse is the oldest horse-racing club in the Southern Hemisphere and the second oldest in the world. Notable royal visits include those of Queen Elizabeth II; Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon; and Prince William, Duke of Cambridge





# TOURISM IN SEYCHELLES

## Country Profile

The Republic of Seychelles is an archipelago of 115 islands situated in the Indian Ocean, southeast of mainland Eastern Africa. With a population of 94,000, the Seychelles is the smallest African country. Most of its economic growth depends on tourism.

**Official Name:** Republic of Seychelles

**Capital City:** Victoria

**Population:** 94,000

**Languages:** French, English, Seychellois Creole

**Currency:** Seychelles Rupees

**Geographic Region:** Africa, Eastern Africa

**Geographic Size (km sq.):** 459



## Main Attractions

### Pristine Beaches

The main attraction of the Seychelles is its famous beaches, examples are the Anse Lazio beach found on the Island of Praslin and the Anse source d'Argent Beach on La Digue.

# ATTRACTIONS IN SEYCHELLES

## *Bel Air Cemetery*



The Bel Air Cemetery, undoubtedly the oldest historic site in Seychelles, was the first official burial ground to be opened on Mahé soon after the establishment of the French settlement in the late 18th century. Important historical milestones, the cemetery's tombs, vaults and shrines contain the remains of some of the islands' most famous personalities such as corsair Jean-Francois Hodoul and the 9ft giant Charles Dorotheé Savy, poisoned at the age of 14 by neighbours fearful of his height.

## *Carrefour des Arts*

Carrefour des Arts residing in the heart of the Seychelles capital Victoria, features the best of local art and craftwork, with themes drawing extensively on Seychellois traditions, folklore and environment. From illustrations to fabric art, Carrefour des Arts plays host to an array of exciting artistic styles, serving as an outlet for Seychellois creativity while providing visitors with an ideal venue to secure a vivid memento of their island experience.



## *Domaine de Val des Près*



Domaine de Val des Près (Craft Village) forms part of the Patrimwann. Experience traditional Creole culture showcased at Domaine de Val des Près. Or, make your own history by getting married, Creole-style on this beautiful property. Domaine de Val des Près consists of five attractions highlighting Creole architecture, arts and craft, and gastronomy: the 'Gran Kaz' Plantation House built around 1870; 'La Kaz Rosa' a typical 20th century working class home, 12 craft workshops that host local crafts; and finally; the 'Maison de Coco, a house built of coconut products in which you will find gifts made from all things coconut.

## *Mahé Market*

A visit to Mahé's busy and colourful market is the way to get a feel for the Seychellois and their way of life. Built in 1840 and renovated in 1999, it remains the bustling heart of the capital and definitely the best place to buy fresh fruits, fish, vegetables and spices. An attractive array of boutiques and shops selling a variety of souvenirs, clothing and local works of art further complement the lively atmosphere that is especially vibrant on Saturday mornings.





# ATTRACTIONS IN SEYCHELLES

## *Mission Lodge*



Situated just below the summit of Sans Soucis, the Mission Lodge affords one of the most extraordinary views of Mahé's west coast. Once the site of a farm and boarding school for liberated slave children that opened in March 1876, it was first known as 'Venn's Town' and then renamed 'Capucin'. In 1889, the number of pupils stood at 79 just before the project began to flounder. Today, ruins of 'Venn's Town' can still be seen at the beginning of an avenue that leads to the viewing lodge that commands a breathtaking view of verdant mountainsides, and the vast azure ocean above which majestic tropic birds glide. Here, tranquillity and stunning natural beauty will conspire to win your heart.

## *Vallée de Mai*

Seychelles' second UNESCO World Heritage Site is the legendary Vallée de Mai, administered by the Seychelles Islands Foundation. So remarkable that it was once believed to be the original site of the Garden of Eden, this hauntingly beautiful primeval forest is home to some 6000 Coco-de-mer trees, considered to be among the botanical wonders of the world. The Vallée boasts six endemic palm species as well as many other indigenous trees and is also the last habitat of the endangered Black Parrot.



## *Curieuse Island*

Hues of red and green colour Curieuse Island, the result of the bare red earth of the hillsides intermingling with the unique green flora of an island peppered with coco-de-mer trees, one of the iconic symbols of Seychelles. Most visitors disembark at Baie Laraie to the sight of multitudes of giant hump head parrotfish and giant tortoises lazing near the rangers' headquarters. The Doctor's House at Anse José, a wonder of Creole colonial architecture, has since been turned into a fascinating museum on whose beach sea turtles still arrive to lay their eggs. A dive at Coral Garden or Pointe Rouge is a MUST as is a snorkelling trip to St. Pierre.



## *Veve Information Centre*

The Veve Information Centre is the only environment office on La Digue. They undertake regular monitoring of Paradise Flycatcher, rare Swiftlets, Sea Turtles and once a year common Land Birds.





# ATTRACTIONS IN SEYCHELLES

## *Cousin*



Cousin is a superb example of an eco-tourism site and is one of the world's very first island reserves. This granite island was first created as a nature reserve in 1968 by the International Council for Bird Preservation (now Birdlife International) to protect the tiny endangered population of Seychelles Warblers. Cousin is an island totally reserved for conservation and the only granitic island in Seychelles totally rehabilitated with natural vegetation. It is one of the best protected sites for nesting Hawksbill turtles in the world and boasts the highest density of lizards per hectare in the world. Cousin is visited by 300,000 nesting seabirds each year and is home to five endemic land birds. It also has the best protected and most diverse fish population of any reserve in the granitic islands.

## *Plantation House*

This attraction forms part of L'Union Estate and is yet another architectural gem among the few plantation houses left in Seychelles. Said to be one of the oldest, the Plantation House is the focal point of L'Union Estate. It is built in French colonial style, with the ground floor made of timber boarding laid on floor joists. The house has a thatched roof, supported by ridge-poles and rafters probably of capucin or takamaka hard wood, which were commonly used in the early years of the 20th century. The flights of steps on all four sides are an essential feature of a plantation house of this period. The house was used several years ago for the shooting of the film *Goodbye Emmanuelle* and is one of the cherished historical souvenirs of Seychelles' Creole heritage.



## *Aride Island*

Aride Island, one of the finest jewels in the Indian Ocean, is also one of the world's most important Nature Reserves. Blessed with a wealth of natural treasures Aride has remained a wild and beautiful paradise. The island was bought as a Nature Reserve in 1973 by Christopher Cadbury, and today is managed by the Island Conservation Society. Aride is home to one million breeding seabirds of ten species, endemic birds such as Magpie Robins, Fodies, Brush Warblers and Blue Pigeon, Endemic Plants like wrights Gardenia and Turtle beaches and rich marine life.



# OVERVIEW OF SINGAPORE

## Country Profile

A gateway to Asia and beyond, Singapore is a young nation full of vigour and a cosmopolitan city brimming with possibilities. We are home to a bustling Central Business District (CBD), a famous shopping street (Orchard Road), a thriving arts and entertainment scene, lively dining and drinking spots, and many must-see attractions. Our rich culture and heritage inspire us, while the future promises to be exciting.

**Official Name:** Republic of Singapore

**Area:** 721.5km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 5,638,700 (2018)

**Language(s):** English, Bahasa Melayu, Chinese, Tamil

**Religions:** Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Taoism

## Language and Culture

Singapore is a multicultural society with four main ethnic groups – Chinese, Malays, Indians and Eurasians. The 4 official languages include English, Bahasa Melayu, Mandarin and Tamil, with English being the main language used for education and business. Residents of Singapore are also bound together by one common language – Singlish (a colloquial form of English), which is an intriguing blend of words, phrases and grammar rules of the 4 official languages.

## Connection and Connectivity



Accustomed to speed and efficiency in almost all areas of life, Singaporeans zip from place to place quickly and with ease. Our integrated public transport system enables locals and tourists to travel efficiently. The comprehensive network of buses, taxis and the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) system, which covers the whole island, is an economical way to move around. Visitors will also find that Wi-Fi hotspots are widely available throughout the island.

## Events and Festivals

There is never a dull moment in Singapore, with exciting events happening all year round. There are plenty of family-friendly events for visitors with children, while music lovers can enjoy concerts and music festivals featuring top international artistes. For art enthusiasts, Singapore hosts several major art fairs yearly. Whether it's the festivities of Chinese New Year or the excitement from the Formula One Night Race, there's always a party going on somewhere on the island.

For more information, visit [www.visitsingapore.com](http://www.visitsingapore.com)

## Passion made Possible

Singapore is much more than the sum of its numerous attractions. It's constantly evolving, reinventing and reimagining itself, with people who are passionate about creating new possibilities. It's where foodies, explorers, collectors, action seekers and socialisers meet and new experiences are created every day.



Beyond a vibrant city landscape, Singapore is truly a great city because of our passionate people. Our drive for excellence pushes us to chase our dreams and make waves everywhere we

go. We are proud of these achievements, but even prouder of our sense of community, diverse cultures, rich heritage, and all the quirks that make us who we are. But most of all, we love being Singaporean, and we're excited to share our passion for Singapore with our visitors.

# KEY ATTRACTIONS IN SINGAPORE

## Parks and Gardens



### Gardens by the Bay

The lush and beautiful Gardens by the Bay is dominated by the sculptured and sleek bi-dome-marvels of architecture, design and engineering. Do check out the Flower Dome and Cloud Forest cooled conservatories, the world's largest column-less greenhouse.

### Singapore Botanic Gardens

A testament to Singapore's reputation as a City in a Garden, the Botanic Gardens is the country's first UNESCO Heritage Site. Highlights include The National Orchid Garden, which boasts the world's largest orchid display, with over 60,000 plants and orchid plants.



## Museums



### National Gallery Singapore

The National Gallery Singapore is a visual arts institution housing an unparalleled collection of modern Singapore and South-east Asian art. Notable art from the region include the works of Raden Saleh (Indonesia), Latiff Mohidin (Malaysia) and Nguyen Gia Tri (Vietnam), while international names whose works have graced this space include Yayoi Kusama and Mark Rothko.

## Wildlife Parks

### Singapore Zoo

Visit Singapore's award-winning wildlife park to see animals roaming freely in their natural habitats. The zoo features 11 zones, each taking you through some of the most distinctive global wildlife habitats in the world.



### River Safari

At the River Safari, meet manatees and monkeys, piranhas and pandas, as they congregate in and around the park's waters.

### Night Safari

Embark on an adventure after dark at the Night Safari, an open-air zoo that houses over 2,500 creatures of the night. Friendlier creatures such as deer roam freely in the park while fiercer ones like leopards are kept behind barriers.

### Jurong Bird Park

Jurong Bird Park has almost every species of birds to impress avian lovers, along with fun exhibits, interactive shows, and of course, its charming residents





# KEY ATTRACTIONS IN SINGAPORE

## Cultural Precincts

### Little India

Little India is a buzzing historic area that shows off the best of Singapore's Indian community, from its vibrant culture to incredible shopping. You may not know that Little India once had a race-course, cattle herders and brick kilns.



### Chinatown

From historic temples to hip new bars, Singapore's Chinatown has it all for both trailblazers and lovers of the traditional. Gain insights into Singapore's rich, multi-ethnic culture by visiting some of the country's oldest places of worship, located in the heart of Chinatown.

### Kampong Glam

Kampong Glam has its origins as a thriving port town and is Singapore's oldest urban quarter. In 1822, Sir Stamford Raffles allocated the area to the Malay, Arab and Bugis communities. This area subsequently became one of the seats of Malay royalty in Singapore.



## Islands



### Sentosa

Experience endless excitement at Resorts World™ Sentosa with a variety of attractions and entertainment hot spots. The highlight for the kids is the Universal Studios Singapore™ theme park, where you will enter the world of the silver screen in seven movie-themed zones. This includes the S.E.A Aquarium™ which features over 100,000 marine animals, the Adventure Cove Waterpark™ which provides the wild and wet fun of waterslides, and Dolphin Island, where you can interact with the friendly mammals.



# ECOTOURISM IN SOMALIA

## Country Profile

Somalia is a country located in the Horn Africa. It is bordered by Ethiopia (west), Djibouti (northwest), the Gulf of Aden (north) and Kenya with a land area of 637,657 Square km. It is interesting to note that Somalia's coastline is more than 3,333 km and is the longest in Africa.

**Official Name:** Federal Republic of Somalia

**Capital City:** Mogadishu

**Population:** 14.74 million (2017)

**Language:** Somali

**Currency:** Somali Shilings

The Somali ecotourism galore still remains intact after two decades of fraternal civil war. The civil war did not only destroy lives and property, but it has also displaced a huge number of Somali wild life and forced them to seek sanctuary in the neighbouring countries, such as, Kenya and Ethiopia. Somalis' destroyed paradise is indeed blessed with a wide range of natural and cultural values that makes an ecotourism a highly splendid, valuable, viable, unique, unexplored, and untapped and worth investing. Needless to say, Somalia has the longest coastal line in Africa stretching about 3,333 km<sup>2</sup>, thus this makes it the best rare ecotourism destination in East Africa and beyond.

In early 70s and 80s, Somalia was enviously perceived as one the fascinating touristic destination in the enclave of the Horn of Africa, ostensibly because for its striking beaches, kind and friendly people, exotic cuisine, superb and luxuries accommodation, serenity and second nature. Somalia has also unexploited architectural heritage and beautiful pristine beaches that are of great tourism value.



Some of those ecotourism destinations are Sinbusi and Baravo beaches in lower Shabelle, Bush-Bush national Park, Goobweyn (where Jubba river and Indian ocean joins) in Lower Jubba, Hafuun – the horn of Africa - in Barri, Daalo Mountain in Sanaag, both rivers Shabelle and Jubba and many other natural destinations. After the Somali government was ousted in 1991, the tourism sector including ministry of tourism destroyed. In those days ministry of tourism owned quite number of stars equivalent hotels, restaurants, national parks, game parks and zoos. The remnants of that white sand are still visible.

In 1992 up to 1996 Somali tourism industry was inactive due UNISOM mission that controlled most of the country, due to that, the only active sectors were air transport, land transport and few guest houses. Starting from 1996 up to 2006, the country re-established its wheel of economy rolling once again with Bakara market and Ceel Macaan port as the edifice on which Somali home grown economy is based on. Well, it is from here that domestic tourism and business tours started gradually movement of commercial goods and people across the Kenya and Ethiopia borders.

That movement encouraged the local tourism to be survived again to welcome those businessman and women to use the inns, guest houses, hotels and land transport. From 2006 up to 2011 the country was under different political stages which totally affected the Somali tourism activities. During that period, an estimated number of Mogadishu population immigrated to other regions and neighbouring countries to live better life and secure environment.

Early of 2012 the heart of Somalia Mogadishu has welcomed the Somali business investors with peace and harmony to rebuild and construct the country especially in tourism and hospitality industry, at same time created an opportunity for



# ECOTOURISM IN SOMALIA

the young Somali boys and girls to work in this industry. Building hotels and restaurants in the town and on the beaches played a huge role of the economic growth, peace progress and social integration. There are other many regions in Somalia that has ecotourism, modern hotels and restaurants, which not much affected by the war and some of those destinations quickly recovered in late of 1990s.

While Mogadishu before the civil war was lined with trees filled with the fragrance of flowers and eucalyptus, fine architecture, splendid weather and revitalising atmosphere. It was simply one of the most beautiful cities in Africa. There are other many regions in Somalia has ecotourism, modern hotels and restaurants, which not much



affected by the war and some of those destinations quickly recovered in late of 1990s.

For the time being, Somalia offers tourists a range of activities in which they may engage to experience and fully appreciate the Somali ecotourism such as, beautiful beaches, golden sand, white sand, waterfalls, hot spring water, caves, bird watching, diving, river cruising and the dam-



age of the civil war which called in tourism terminologies' - Dark Tourism – for tourists' memorial and experience before Somalia fully recovers from the pain of the civil war.

There are also historical heritage sites in the country and some of those sites built four centuries ago in different regions. Somalia's reputation as one of the best ecotourism destinations in the region although will take time to re-establish the whole tourism infrastructure and mechanism. The tourism and hospitality industry also will be following the Somali economic sustainable plan to recover the Somali economic growth to rebuild the country and open new doors for the local and foreign investors, and public private partnership.



The Somali government also realises the importance of sustainable tourism and of balancing conservation and development. Such as, the department of tourism, Somalia, advised by the Somali Tourism Association (SOMTA) based in Mogadishu to adopt the National Ecotourism Plan (NEP) to provide policies and guidelines for the conscientious development of ecotourism.

Despite all those economic hardships that Somalia has faced and hurdles that Somalia ecotourism had to jump over, the motionless white sand still remains intact. To sum up, with the presence of return of Somali investors from abroad, constructing hotel businesses and the public private sector as well, to underline that there are promising and bright future for Somali tourism industry as long the white sand still remained intact.