

SEYCHELLES




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COUNTRY INFORMATION, FACTS & ADVICE

Seychelles

A thousand miles off the coast of Africa, the 115 islands of the Seychelles scatter like gemstones across the blue expanse of the Indian Ocean. Of these 115 islands, 41 constitute the oldest mid-oceanic granite islands on earth while a further 74 form the low-lying coral atolls and reef islands of the Outer Islands. The granitic islands of the Seychelles archipelago cluster around the main island of Mahé, home to the international airport and the capital, Victoria, and its satellites Praslin and La Digue. Together, these Inner Islands form the cultural and economic hub of the nation and contain the majority of Seychelles' tourism facilities as well as its most stunning beaches.

These seductive islands offer unspoilt beauty in a natural setting, whether on a flat coral castaway atoll or an island carpeted by rich vegetation and dominated by rugged granite mountains. Winding lanes meander through swaying coconut groves; crystal clear waters lap the shore and, as night falls, intimate candlelit dinners are taken beneath a blanket of stars. With a backdrop of towering 1000m granite peaks, Mahé is an extraordinary treasure trove of flora that has evolved over centuries of splendid isolation. Praslin, easily accessed from Mahe, has the UNESCO world Heritage site of Vallee de Mai, once believed to be the original site of the Garden of Eden. This lush interior is home to the coco de mer (the world's largest seed) and to the rare Seychelles black parrot. La Digue is an island where time stands still and time-honoured traditions such as travelling by ox-cart and bicycle are still king. Traditional methods of boat building and refining of coconut products (copra) are still practised on La Digue.

Getting into Seychelles

Please check with your nearest Seychelles Consulate for up to date information.

All visitors are required to carry a passport that is valid for six months beyond the intended length of stay. There should be sufficient blank pages next to each other per entry.

Please contact your local Seychelles Embassy to establish whether a visa is required.

Keeping Healthy in Seychelles

This is a crucial part of your pre-holiday planning and it is vital to seek professional advice on up-to-date health requirements. Some vaccinations require more than one visit over a period of some weeks. It is also important to check your routine vaccinations such as tetanus are up-to-date. If you are travelling to remote areas, remember to ask about medical kit requirements. Passengers combining a holiday to Kenya, Tanzania and the Seychelles must have a Yellow Fever vaccination at least 10 days prior to arrival in the Seychelles. Upon arrival you will be asked to produce a certificate to confirm that you have been vaccinated.

- If you are on prescribed medication, we recommend you take a prescription copy in case of loss or damage to your existing supply.
- Ensure you pack enough medication in your hand luggage for the duration of your trip as it may not be available locally. It is important that it is in its original packaging.
- Check with the relevant embassy or consulate that your medication will be legal in that country and find out whether you need to take a doctor's letter with you.
- If you suffer from a circulatory disorder: consult your GP before travelling.
- Always carry a simple travellers' first-aid kit containing any basic items that you feel may be needed.
- It is important to read and follow the airline's health guidelines.

Please ensure that we are aware of any physical disability or frequent or on-going medical requirements.

Tipping

Tipping is not compulsory. You are travelling on an independent itinerary and the cost of your program does not include gratuities. Tipping is a very personal matter and should only be considered when the staff have gone above and beyond for you. Should you feel you would like to acknowledge their service, please consider the following as a rough guide, per day.

Type of Service	Number of guests travelling					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tour Director	15	30	45	60	75	90
Driver / Guide (Half day)	8	16	24	32	40	48
Driver / Guide (Full day)	12	24	36	48	60	72
Hotel Porters	5	10	15	20	25	30
Professional Guide	15	30	45	60	75	90
Ranger	15	30	45	60	75	90
Tracker	8	16	24	32	40	48
Lodge staff	12	24	36	48	60	72

Please note: Currency is in USD

The above tipping guidelines are recommendations only and are not compulsory. Please use your own discretion in tipping, based on quality of service.

Restaurants

Most charges (restaurant, hotel, taxis, porters, etc) already include a 5% to 10% service charge or "tip" and so tipping is not obligatory in Seychelles. However, as a reward for exceptional service, a nominal tip is sure to be warmly received.

Taxis

Taxi drivers do not expect to be tipped but they appreciate the fare being rounded up.

Porterage

If you are being transferred by an Abercrombie & Kent representative from the airport to a hotel, then porterage and tipping of porters is already included. You are not expected to tip the A&K representative. Porterage and tipping of porters for transfers from one hotel to another is as above.

Talk the talk

There are three official languages in Seychelles: Creole (a lilted, French-based patois), English and French. Many Seychellois also speak fluent Italian or German.

English	French
Welcome	Bienvenu
Hello	Salut
Pleased to meet you	Enchanté(e) de vous rencontrer
Good morning	Bonjour
Good afternoon	Bon après midi
Good evening	Bonne soirée
Good night	Bonne nuit

Goodbye	Aurevoir
Good luck	Bonne Chance
Please	S'il vous plait
Thank you	Merci

Weather

The islands of the Seychelles enjoy a year-round warm tropical climate, generally governed by two opposing trade winds. The south-easterly trades blow from May to September bringing drier and windier conditions ideal for sailing. From October to March the gentler north-west trades provide calmer seas but a higher chance of refreshing showers. Scuba divers will find April, May, October and November have the warmest seas and visibility is often 30 metres plus.

What to Pack

If you wear prescription glasses or contact lenses, we recommend that you bring an extra pair of glasses or a copy of the prescription. You should carry along an adequate supply of any prescribed medication you may require while travelling. Prescription medicines should always be carried in your hand luggage (not in checked baggage) in the original, labelled containers only.

Light clothing suitable for the Seychelles warm tropical climate is recommended and visitors should prepare themselves for the hot and humid weather. Hats, sunglasses and adequate supplies of sun protection are recommended – the sun can be deceptively strong even on an overcast day. Casual evening wear is normally all that is required (long trousers for gentlemen) together with appropriate footwear. It may be a good idea to bring adequate supplies of sun cream and insect repellent with you as local supplies are erratic and expensive. Sturdy walking shoes are recommended if you intend to take guided walk and trail excursions. Please note that it is an offence for anyone, including children, to wear camouflage clothing.

Religion & Etiquette

Roman Catholicism remains the dominant religion of Seychelles but there are also Anglican and Protestant churches and the places of worship of other denominations. These live in harmony alongside, Muslim, Hindu and Bahá'í communities based on Mahé, Praslin and La Digue.

Money

Currency

The local currency is the Seychelles Rupee (SCR), which is divided into 100 cents. Visitors must, by law, pay for all services provided by hotels in major international currency notes or by credit card. ATMs are available in Mahé and Praslin. Costs for taxis may be paid using foreign or local currencies. Currency may only be exchanged at banks, authorised money dealer or the hotel cashier. There is a currency exchange in the airport. In order to exchange Seychelles Rupees back into a foreign currency you must have the official receipt from your initial authorised dealer to the bank.

Banking hours

Monday – Friday: 8.30am – 2.30pm

Saturday: 8.30am –11.00am

Credit cards

American Express, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted; Diners Club has more limited use.

Time Zone

Seychelles Time, or SCT, is a time zone used by in the Indian Ocean island nation of the Seychelles. The zone is four hours ahead of UTC. Daylight saving time is not observed in this time zone.

Shopping

Be careful when investing in "genuine antiques" which in many cases are excellent forgeries, even though they may come with a "certificate of authenticity". We suggest you bring your purchases home with you as shipping takes a long time and goods may arrive damaged, or at times not arrive at all.

Local Food & Drink

We recommend that you purchase bottled water, readily available throughout the country, and ensure that the seal is not broken on the bottle. It should also be used for cleaning teeth. Creole cuisine features the subtleties and nuances of French cooking, the exoticism of Indian dishes and the piquant flavours of the Orient. Grilled fish or octopus basted with a sauce of crushed chillies, ginger and garlic are national favourites as are a variety of delicious curries prepared with coconut milk and innovative chatinis made from local fruits such as papaya and golden apple. As may be expected, seafood dishes feature predominantly in the local cuisine, appearing alongside the national staple, rice.