

MAURITIUS



COUNTRY INFORMATION, FACTS & ADVICE

Mauritius

Once at the crossroads of the African and Arabian trade routes, the island of Mauritius encapsulates a melting pot of cultures. Driving across this spectacular island you will see visions in saffron saris walking gracefully under the shade of banyan trees and Hindu temples covered in deities rising out of fields shoulder high with sugar cane. Mauritius holidays are defined by the island's hospitable people, delicious cuisine, miles of sandy beaches and array of watersport activities.

Of volcanic origin and generally sheltered by barriers of coral reefs forming natural, safe, crystal clear lagoons, Mauritius has long been a dream destination. Off major shipping routes, Mauritius remained uninhabited until the 16th century, allowing it to develop into one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. It was favoured by pirates and occupied briefly by the Dutch before the French brought African slaves to work the sugar plantations. Captured by the British in 1810, Mauritius achieved independence in 1968. Its diversification into textiles, tourism and, of late, financial services, telecommunications and cyber services has been an Indian Ocean economic success story. So too has its stable multicultural society. This friendly co-existence of cultures expresses itself in croissants for breakfast and curry for dinner, and Indian temples near French colonial mansions.

Getting into Mauritius

Please check with your nearest Mauritius 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 Mauritius Embassy to establish whether a visa is required.

Keeping Healthy in Mauritius

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.

- 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

It is customary to add 10% to the bill in restaurants, if the service has been satisfactory.

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

English is the official language in Mauritius and French is also widely spoken. The colloquial language which is spoken by everyone is Creole. In many families one speaks also Indian languages, the Chinese Canton and Arabian dialects.

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

Mauritius experiences a hot and humid summer from December to April and cooler, drier conditions from May to November. Under the influence of the prevailing south-easterly winds, the east coast is slightly cooler and wetter than the west. The winds can bring a welcome relief to the east coast in the hottest summer months but are more blustery in July and August. The cyclone season lasts from December to March. Although a direct hit is rare, cyclones far out at sea can bring some days of squally rain.

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. There is a very simple and straightforward dress code to adhere to in Mauritius; beachwear by day and smart casual lightweight clothing by night. Obviously with any hot country you must be sure to take a hat and sunglasses for protection from the scorching midday sun. It is suggested that you pack a jacket or warm sweater for travels during June - September. Please show due respect when visiting religious places. Wear appropriate clothing (and remove leather shoes and belts) when entering the premises.

Religion & Etiquette

Mauritius is a blend of diverse cultures and religions. The population consists of Hindus, Creole, Chinese, Muslims and Europeans. Majority of the people in Mauritius are Hindus, followed by Roman Catholics, other Christians and Muslims.

Money

Currency

The local currency is the Mauritius Rupee, which is divided into 100 cents. Currency can be exchanged at major banks and in hotels. ATMs are widely available in most towns in the island and at large shopping centres.

Banking hours

Monday to Thursday: 9.15am – 3.15pm

Fridays: 9.15am – 3.15pm

Credit cards

Credit cards are accepted by most hotels, restaurants and large retailers.

Time Zone

Mauritius Time, or MUT, is the time zone used by the Indian Ocean island nation of Mauritius. The zone is four hours ahead of UTC

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.

During Ramadan all shops close their doors two hours prior to sunset and for another two hours after sunset. They then re-open and remain open until after midnight.

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. Standards of cuisine, whether French, Creole, Indian, Chinese or English, are generally very high, but fruit, meat, vegetables and even fresh seafood are often imported. Regional specialties include, Venison, camarons (freshwater prawns) in hot sauces, octopus, dholl purri (a wheat pancake stuffed with ground peas and served with curry) and gateaux piments (chilli cakes).