



Cruising the Seychelles Islands

by G.S. Burridge

Today, more than ever, the Seychelles archipelago's 115 sparkling islands offer a refreshing, new cruising horizon for yachts and a reassuring world of safety, diversity and purity that is a far cry from overcrowded and over-commercialised destinations elsewhere.

Good moorings and easy sailing distances between the main islands facilitate the discovery of a wide selection of islands and secluded bays while the pristine atolls and virgin waters of the 'Outer Islands' offer a last frontier of adventure together with extraordinary opportunities for snorkelling, diving, fishing and once-in-a-lifetime exploration in places where few have yet ventured.

Suggested itineraries

Inner islands

DAY 1. Leaving Eden Island Marina, you can travel up the scenic northern coast towards Beau Vallon, the epicenter of Mahé Island's tourism industry with its various hotels, restaurants, dive centres and other facilities. This is the place to drop anchor while you enjoy a dip or a walk along what is arguably Seychelles' best known beach from where several hotels, restaurants, cafés and a casino are all within easy reach. For the evening move round to Port Glaud and anchor on the east side of Ile Therese for the evening and enjoy one of the Seychelles beautiful sunsets. A few hundred meters to the north is the Marine park Port Laurney. The 5 star Ephillia resort is also an easy tender ride away if you fancy a meal ashore, a relaxing spa treatment or just a quiet cocktail at the bar.





Beau Vallon



Port Glaud

DAY 2. Head away from Mahé's north coast west to the dramatically mountainous island of Silhouette, Remarkably un touched by man with the smallest of local communities but home to the beautiful Hilton Labriz Resort and spa

DAY 3. You cruise down the wild, west coast of Mahé, past glorious Grand Anse and the well-protected bay of Anse à la Mouche before arriving at picturesque Anse Soleil in time for one of the finest sea food lunches around. A short cruise past the Four Seasons and around the headland brings you to Baie Lazare for the evening, in time for an afternoon snorkel along the reef and yet another spectacular sunset. If further pampering is required the Kempinski resort is ashore



Bai Lazare and Intendance

DAY 4. This is an ideal place from where to enjoy the famous southern bays of Petit Anse, Intendance, Police Bay and Anse Marie-Louise before heading off to Praslin Island, some 26 miles distant, and home to the fabulous Vallée de Mai where the legendary Coco-de-Mer grows on ancient palms in a primordial valley. Time to explore Praslin, Seychelles' second largest island, host to some of the world's most renowned beaches and a place where to enjoy a more tranquil pace of island living.



Female Coco de Mer



Valle Di Mai

DAY 5 A gently cruise around the south of Praslin and north along the east coast past the picturesque bay of Cote D'Or and you will arrive at the Marine park of Curieuse or a little further north to the stunning anchorage of Anse Lazio for a relaxing afternoon snorkelling in the marine park or visiting the giant tortoises on Curieuse or at Anse Lazio.



Curieuse



Anse Lazio

An early evening cruise to Grand and Petit Soeur, perhaps an informal BBQ on board to soak up the natural beauty.



Grand and Petit Soeur

Day 6. Quieter still is neighboring La Digue where time is said to stand still and where the bicycle and ox-cart remain the principal mode of transport. You will find many examples of fine Creole architecture lining the shaded island pathways of this magnificent island so rich in local tradition.



Ox cart



Anse Source d'Argent La Digue

DAY 7. Saint Anne Marine Park is the perfect location for the final night before returning to the Marina the next morning



Saint Anne Marine Park

The Seychelles Islands

Occupying some 1,350,000 sq. km of territorial water, the Seychelles archipelago's islands fall into two distinct groups. 41 of its tall granitic 'Inner Islands' are situated on a relatively shallow submarine bank known as the Seychelles plateau, while 74 low-lying, coralline 'Outer Islands' extend in a gleaming arc towards the east coast of Africa.

The islands fall into six groups. The first is the 'Inner Island' group of the main islands of Mahé, Praslin, La Digue and the surrounding islands up to a distance of 100 km. Next is the Amirantes group, 250 km south west of Mahé, the Southern Coral group, Alphonse group, Farquhar group and finally the Aldabra group, 1100 km from Mahé.

Centrally located in the region, Seychelles is a naturally attractive destination for any yacht visiting the Indian Ocean. Located outside the cyclone belt with no risk of contracting malaria, yellow fever, cholera or other common

tropical diseases and with a sublime tropical climate, Seychelles offers a carefree, year-round cruising season. Straightforward immigration (no visas required) and health regulations also make for an uncomplicated, hassle-free stay.

Another world....

Seychelles is a sanctuary. Not only for its 87,000 strong population and the extraordinary bio-diversity of its pristine islands - but also for the select number of tourists who make the pilgrimage to its world-beating beaches, magnificent coral reefs, untouched forests and exotic island hideaways.

Seychelles remains, quite literally, a 'breath of fresh air' and a powerful antidote to the stresses and strains of modern living. Its long-standing reputation for stability and social harmony make for a friendly society in which the visitor will instantly feel welcome and secure. In this tranquil yet vibrant culture English, French and Creole are the three official languages with German and Italian also spoken by some.

An array of authentic attractions

This exclusive destination has a great deal to offer. Not only are the islands famous for their many world-beating beaches but enlightened conservation measures have ensured that almost half of the limited landmass has been set-aside as a "living natural history museum", boasting some of the rarest species of flora and fauna on earth – a heaven for ornithologists and nature lovers.

Seychelles is already home to two UNESCO World Heritage sites, the fabulous 'Vallée de Mai' on the island of Praslin where the coco-de-mer, the world's only double-lobed coconut, has become an icon to sensuality and mystery, and 'Aldabra', the largest raised coral atoll on earth.

The islands also provide spectacular opportunities for safe swimming, snorkelling, and diving in warm, crystal waters fringing beaches of powder-soft sand, framed by age-old granite boulders and lush palm forests. Whether novice or aficionado, diving in Seychelles is to enter a pristine world of astonishing diversity and teeming marine life. Whether diving the granite reefs of the Inner Islands or venturing further afield to the coral reefs of the Outer

Islands, you can be assured of enjoying the diving experience of your life amid turtles, rays, dolphins and even that gentle giant of the seas, the whale shark.

Fishing in Seychelles is increasingly being recognised for offering some of the best sport on the planet. Deep-sea fishing is especially popular for offering one of the best mixed-bags on the planet and one that includes yellowfin and dogtooth tuna, wahoo, trevally, streaker, barracuda, sailfish and the mighty marlin. Traditional bottom-fishing or palangrotte promises catches grouper, emperor, bream among many other species of bottom-dwelling fish. Seychelles is fast becoming a Mecca for bone-fishing on the flats of its Outer Islands and even off the mainland and the sport is considered to offer some of the best challenges to be found anywhere.

The main islands of Mahé, Praslin and La Digue provide enticing opportunities to discover the diversity of Seychelles' amazing flora & fauna on guided nature trails and also to recalibrate mind, body and soul in wide choice of Spa & Wellness Centres dotted throughout the islands. Golf is also gaining in popularity with a nine-hole course on the main island, Mahé and a magnificent championship course on the neighbouring island of Praslin.

Seychelles is also expanding its suite of events and is planning the 3rd edition of the Carnaval International de Victoria between the 8th and 10th February 2013. The previous two editions have gradually increased in size and now boast participation from upwards of 25 foreign floats including the Rio and Notting Hill carnivals, Dusseldorf, Indonesia, Russia and Italy. Other events are the annual Seychelles Regatta, the SUBIOS Festival of the Sea, the Eco-friendly Marathon, Feast of the Assumption, Seychelles Ball, Festival Kreol and the Mind Body & Soul Festival.

Victoria, the charming capital and one of the world's tiniest, is situated on the main island of Mahé within walking distance of the port and is a convenient stepping stone to discovering the charms of authentic island living and the vibrant culture as well as the attractions of island-hopping. Throughout all the principal islands you will discover quaint art galleries, craft shops, old Creole-style plantation houses, picturesque restaurants serving delicious Creole cuisine, scenic viewpoints, secret valleys and natural wonders above and beneath the waves. An efficient network of inter-island boats, aeroplanes and helicopter transfers can accommodate almost any tailored schedule while a discreetly modern infrastructure ensures that you are only ever as far away from the rest of the world as you desire to be.

Seychelles has long been recognised as the jewel in the Indian Ocean's crown and represents a last exotic frontier for vessels wishing to escape the congestion and convention of the more common ports of call. Among these islands where summer never sets and where harmony is a way of life, you will find everything you need for a truly memorable sailing vacation whose memories will never desert you.

An unsurpassable sailing experience for today's discerning traveller, the Seychelles islands remain safe, authentic and ... *'another world'* entirely. A refreshing departure from the highly processed experiences of more crowded and commercialised destinations, Seychelles remains deliciously unplugged and true to its island soul.



Alastair Maiden
Director

Seal Superyachts Seychelles
P.O. Box 1313
Victoria
Mahe
Seychelles

Tel: +248 4242066
Mobile: +248 2515051
BBM: 2357EA26
E mail: seal@seychelles.net
Web: www.seal-superyachts.com
Film: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7S1kXkouZRE>