

## By Anonymous traveler (Sep'2023)

### Maldives, Seychelles, Mauritius, Réunion & Comoros

I recently had the incredible opportunity to embark on a journey that took me through some of the most breathtaking destinations in the Indian Ocean. From the stunning Malé in the Maldives to the vibrant Mahé Island in Seychelles, the adventure continued to the enchanting Sainte-Marie in Réunion, the vibrant Port Louis in Mauritius, and finally to the captivating Moroni in Comoros. Each place offered its unique charm and left me with unforgettable memories.



As I embarked on my journey in Malé, the heart of the Maldives, I was immediately captivated by the allure of this tropical paradise. My first destination - the renowned Paradise Island - lived up to its name, immersing me in the true essence of paradise from the very beginning.

One of the highlights of my trip was snorkeling in the crystal-clear waters surrounding Paradise Island. As I dipped beneath the surface, I was instantly transported to a vibrant underwater world, teeming with life. The kaleidoscope of colors and the mesmerizing dance of marine creatures left an indelible mark on my memory. The serenity and beauty of this experience will forever be etched in my mind.

In addition to snorkeling, I had the privilege of joining fishing excursions that allowed me to connect with the local culture. Accompanied by skilled fishermen, I witnessed the traditional way of life firsthand. From casting the net to reaping the rewards of a successful catch, this experience provided a glimpse into the age-old fishing traditions that truly define the Maldivian way of life. But my adventures did not end there. Island-hopping excursions unveiled the hidden gems of the Maldives, each more enchanting than the last. Exploring remote islands allowed me to bask in pristine beaches, discover secret coves, and encounter untouched nature. The Maldives' unparalleled beauty seemed boundless, and I found myself lost in its mesmerizing charm.



To witness this tropical haven from a different perspective, I embarked on a breathtaking photo flight by seaplane. As the seaplane glided above the turquoise waters, I marveled at the panoramic views of the Maldives' scattered islands. The aerial vantage point revealed the intricate tapestry of colors, shapes, and natural wonders that make up this archipelago.



Seeking an even deeper connection with the underwater world, I ventured on a submarine excursion. Descending into the depths, I found myself surrounded by vibrant coral reefs and an abundance of marine species. This immersive experience offered a genuine appreciation of the Maldives' commitment to preserving its fragile ecosystems, reminding me of the importance of protecting our oceans for future generations.

Not merely content with exploring nature, I also took the opportunity to delve into the cultural heritage of Malé. A visit to the bustling fish market allowed me to witness the vibrant energy of local trade and gain insight into the daily lives of the Maldivian people. Further enriching my understanding of the Maldives' history, I explored the National Museum and marveled at its collection of artifacts, preserving the island nation's rich cultural tapestry. A visit to the Friday Mosque offered a glimpse into the spiritual heart of the Maldives, with its intricate designs and serene ambiance.

As I conclude my journey in Malé, I am filled with gratitude for the unforgettable experiences I have had. From snorkeling and fishing to island-hopping and cultural exploration, each activity has allowed me to uncover a different facet of the Maldives' beauty. The Maldives is indeed a paradise that goes beyond pristine beaches and azure waters. It is a tapestry of enchanting experiences that leave a lasting impression. I encourage all travelers to embark on their own Maldivian adventure, discovering the true essence of paradise for themselves.

After bidding farewell to the Maldives, my journey continued to Mahé Island in Seychelles. The northern side of Mahé Island greeted me with open arms, offering a warm welcome in the form of the charming capital city, Victoria. Strolling through its streets, I couldn't help but be captivated by the island's unique blend of Creole, African, and European influences. One of the first sights that caught my eye was the Little Ben Clock Tower, standing proudly amidst the bustling cityscape. Its elegant architecture and historical significance served as a fascinating introduction to the island's past. My desire to delve deeper into the local culture led me to the colorful bazaars that lined the streets. Swathed in bright fabrics and adorned with intricate craftwork, these bustling markets were a feast for the senses. As I weaved my way through the stalls, I couldn't resist the temptation to purchase some vibrant fabrics and handcrafted souvenirs, each reflecting the vibrant spirit of Seychelles. Eager to explore beyond the city limits, I ventured to the Wild South of the island. I found myself in awe of the majestic mountains of Sans Soucis, rising proudly against the azure sky. Their peaks seemed to kiss the heavens, leaving me breathless with their imposing beauty. As I continued my journey, the lush green tea plantations unfolded before me, their neatly manicured rows providing a soothing respite from the





tropical heat. The scent of freshly brewed tea filled the air, tempting me to indulge in a moment of tranquility amidst nature's splendor.

To add an authentic touch to my experience, I explored the picturesque villages scattered along the way. These hidden gems offered a glimpse into the daily lives of the island's residents, inviting me to connect with the authentic essence of Seychelles. From the traditional architecture of the houses to the warm smiles that greeted me at every corner, I felt a sense of belonging and gratitude for the opportunity to witness the simplicity and beauty of Seychellois life.



No journey through Mahê Island would be complete without a visit to the renowned Cap Lazare Nature Reserve. Stepping into this sanctuary, I found myself surrounded by a breathtaking display of Seychelles' natural wonders. Pristine beaches kissed by turquoise waters met dense tropical jungles, creating a harmonious blend of land and sea. As I explored the winding trails, I encountered exotic bird species, vibrant flora, and even glimpses of the island's diverse marine life.

Leaving Cap Lazare Nature Reserve, I felt a deep sense of awe and appreciation for the natural beauty that Seychelles offered. From the charming capital of Victoria, adorned with its Little Ben Clock Tower and lively bazaars, to the wild and untamed beauty of Mahê Island's southern landscapes, this journey had revealed a side of Seychelles that surpassed even my wildest dreams.

As I bid farewell to Mahê Island, I couldn't help but marvel at the way it had effortlessly tied together culture, nature, and adventure into one unforgettable experience. From the vibrant streets of Victoria to the majestic mountains and tranquil villages, this captivating island had not only welcomed me with open arms but had left an indelible mark on my soul—a mark that would forever draw me back to the beauty and wonder of Seychelles.

From the moment I arrived on Mahê Island, I knew I had embarked on a remarkable adventure that would captivate my senses. Leaving Mahê behind, I found myself irresistibly drawn to the allure of Praslin. Stepping foot onto this idyllic island, I was truly astounded by the natural wonders awaiting me. One such marvel was the enchanting Vallee de Mai forest, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Walking among towering coco de mer palms, I felt embraced by an otherworldly ambiance. The forest's mystical aura heightened as I caught a glimpse of the rare black parrots fluttering through the dense canopy. In this ethereal haven, time felt suspended, allowing me to revel in the serenity of nature. On the western coast of Praslin, I discovered the ultimate beach paradise - Cote D'or Beach. Its shimmering turquoise waters and powdery white sands were a sight to behold. This picturesque stretch of coastline, fringed by swaying coconut palms, offered the perfect respite from everyday worries. I spent blissful hours basking in the sun's warm embrace and immersing myself in the gentle lull of the ocean waves.

Delving further into Praslin's rich history, I embarked on a voyage through time at L'Union Estate. This captivating plantation provided insight into the island's colonial past. As I wandered through the estate's carefully preserved structures, a deep sense of appreciation for the people who toiled on these lands



filled me. The highlight of my visit was encountering the majestic giant tortoises, a living testament to the island's biodiversity and endurance.

No trip to Praslin would be complete without setting foot on Anse Source d'Argent Beach. The iconic granite rock formations, weathered by time, stood as sentinels against the backdrop of pristine white sands. As the sun cast its golden glow upon this paradise, I marveled at the harmonious interplay of elements before me. An afternoon spent here was not just tranquil but utterly transformative.

Returning to Mahê, I embarked on a nautical escapade in Ste. Anne Marine Park. Cruising along the archipelago's islands, I found myself awestruck by the brilliance of the turquoise waters and the breathtaking panoramas that unfolded before me. Each island seemed to possess its singular charm, drawing me in with its untouched beauty and serene atmosphere.



To truly delve into the wonders of the marine world, I opted for a glass bottom boat tour at Baie Ternay Park. As the hull glided effortlessly through the crystal-clear waters, revealing vibrant coral reefs below, I witnessed a mesmerizing underwater dance of shimmering fish and intricate marine life. It was a window into a realm seldom explored, leaving an indelible impression on me. With a thirst for adventure and tranquility, I embarked on the Surf N'Turf excursion to Anse Major. This enchanting beach offered the perfect combination of thrill and relaxation. The invigorating hike up the cliffs rewarded me with awe-inspiring panoramic views, and I reveled in the untamed beauty of nature. Finally, I surrendered myself to the soothing embrace of Anse Major's golden sands, feeling truly in tune with the rhythm of the waves.

Leaving the Seychelles, a kaleidoscope of memories danced before my eyes. From the enchanting forests and idyllic beaches of Praslin to the turquoise waters and exquisite marine life of Ste. Anne Marine Park, this archipelago had offered me an unforgettable journey. I've returned home with a heart brimming with gratitude for the Seychelles' natural splendor and a renewed zest for exploring the world's hidden gems.

Leaving the Seychelles behind, I was filled with anticipation as I embarked on my next adventure to the enchanting island of Réunion. As I set foot on the shores of Sainte-Marie, I was immediately captivated by its mesmerizing beauty and natural splendor. The first stop on my itinerary was the exquisitely pristine Hermitage Lagoon Beach. The calm turquoise waters and powdery white sands whispered promises of tranquility and serenity. It was the perfect place to unwind and soak up the peaceful ambiance that surrounded me.

But it was the helicopter tour that truly took my breath away. As I soared high above the island, my eyes were treated to a visual feast of magnificent sights. The iconic White Waterfall cascaded down the rugged cliffs, creating a mesmerizing spectacle. And then there was the awe-inspiring Piton de la Fournaise Volcano, standing tall and majestic against the azure sky. Its fiery presence reminded me of the raw, untamed power of nature.





Continuing my journey, I ventured into the Deep South of Sainte-Marie. Here, I embarked on a fascinating exploration of its hidden treasures. Grand Anse, with its captivating beauty, revealed a secluded beach where time seemed to stand still. The mesmerizing lava flow road, a testament to the island's volcanic roots, took me on a dramatic journey through the heart of Réunion's volcanic landscapes. As I reached the serene village of Piton Sainte Rose, I was greeted by a sense of tranquility that seemed to permeate the air. The village's charming streets and quaint houses provided a glimpse into the traditional way of life on the island. It was a moment of reflection and appreciation for the rich cultural heritage that dwelled in this corner of the world.



But the wonders of Réunion didn't end there. Anse des Cascades beckoned with its cascading waterfalls and lush greenery, reminding me of the island's abundant natural treasures. And then there was Cap Méchant, where the rugged coastline showcased nature's raw power, as waves crashed against the imposing cliffs. It was a reminder of the untamed forces that had shaped this remarkable island. Leaving Sainte-Marie, the splendor of Réunion lingered in my heart and soul. The island had bewitched me with its pristine beaches, breathtaking views, and captivating landscapes. It was a place where tranquility and natural wonders merged, creating an unforgettable experience that would forever be etched in my memories.

Continuing my adventure in Port Louis, Mauritius, I was eager to delve deeper into the vibrant culture and rich history of this tropical paradise. The next leg of my journey took me on a captivating tour that showcased the best of this enchanting city.

My first stop was the SSR Botanical Gardens, a mesmerizing haven of botanical wonders that left me speechless. Spread across 37 acres, this verdant oasis boasts an impressive collection of native and exotic plants. Strolling amidst swaying palms and vibrant blooms, I couldn't help but marvel at the sheer beauty of this place.

From there, I made my way to the Kaylasson Multicolored Tamil Temple, a testament to the multicultural tapestry of Mauritius. As I entered this striking temple adorned with intricate designs and vibrant hues, I was immersed in a world of spirituality and devotion. The rhythmic chants and the smell of incense filled the air, creating an atmosphere of serenity.

To gain a deeper understanding of the island's history, I visited Le Chateau de Labourdonnais. This beautifully restored colonial mansion allowed me to travel back in time and experience the opulence of bygone eras. Roaming through its elegant rooms and lush gardens, I learned about the island's colonial heritage and the intricate details of plantation life.

No visit to Port Louis would be complete without witnessing the picture-perfect vistas of Cap Malheureux. As I stood on the coastline, the azure waters stretching as far as the eye could see, and the



iconic, red-roofed church juxtaposed against the turquoise sea, I felt a sense of tranquility wash over me. It was a moment that I will treasure forever.

The South Tour of Port Louis was an opportunity to explore the lesser-known gems of the island. At Bois Chéri tea plantation, I discovered the artistry behind tea production, from plucking the leaves to the intricacies of tea tasting. Visiting Ganga Talao, a sacred lake nestled in the heart of the island, was a spiritual experience like no other. The breathtaking landscapes of the Savanne district further highlighted the raw beauty of Mauritius.

My gastronomic adventure continued with a delightful lunch at Le Chamarel, a renowned restaurant known for its scrumptious local cuisine. The rich flavors and unique culinary techniques tantalized my taste buds, leaving me craving for more. Following this delectable feast, a visit to the Chamarel Waterfalls offered a magical spectacle that left me awe-struck. The cascading waters against the verdant backdrop of the Black River Gorge National Park created a captivating scene of natural beauty.



To satisfy my culinary cravings, I ventured on a local lunch and winery tour in Port Louis. From savoring authentic dishes bursting with flavors to indulging in the finest wines at Takamaka boutique winery, every moment was a celebration of Mauritius' culinary heritage. Dining at the acclaimed Kot Marie Michelle elevated my gastronomic experience to new heights, with its fusion of local and international flavors.

As my journey drew to a close, I arrived in Moroni, Comoros, eager to discover the hidden treasures and rich heritage of the Grande Comoros. This enchanting city offered an immersive experience that allowed me to step back in time and embrace the essence of this historical island. The Moroni Medina, with its winding alleys and bustling markets, took me on a journey through centuries of history. Exploring this UNESCO World Heritage Site, I marveled at the beautifully preserved architecture and experienced the vibrant atmosphere of the local culture. The ornate mosques scattered throughout the medina added a touch of spiritual grandeur to the surroundings.

At the Moroni Museum, I delved into the captivating history of the island. The exhibits, spanning from ancient civilizations to the struggles for independence, painted a vivid picture of Comoros' past. A visit to the 17th-century fortress provided further insight, as I learned about the strategic importance of this stronghold and the historical events that shaped the region.



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