



Villa Mauritius Holidays – Mauritius Information Guide

Flic en Flac – Le Morne – Grand Baie – Perebere – Mahebourg

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Welcome to Villa Mauritius Holiday's, your complete information guide to an unforgettable holiday in the sunshine island of Mauritius. From places to visit, through to various leisure and sports activities available, to useful information such as immigration, currency and transportation, this in-depth guide to Mauritius will make you discover the stunning island to its fullest.

Mauritius is situated South-West of the Indian Ocean. Mauritius is an island of about 1,865 square kilometers with 330 kms of coastline almost entirely surrounded by coral reefs, a central terrain and outstanding mountains.



North

The north is a must-see place for visitors to the island. Full of energy and lots to see and do. Excellent beaches white soft sands for relaxing and water-sports.

Pereybère (Peu-ray-bear)

Pereybère's public beach is a favorite hot-spot for tourists and popular because of its varied shopping facilities, internet-cafes and restaurants, with Creole, Indian, Chinese and International foods. There are also casinos, supermarkets, souvenir and craft shops offering high quality articles.

It can get busy during bank holidays and weekends. Water sports are available.

Buses between Port Louis and Cap Malheureus stop in Perebere as well as Grand Baie. Services run every 30 minutes.

You can rent cars, motorbikes and bicycles through the local tour agents.



Grand Baie (Grand-bay)

Once called De Bogt Zonder Eyndt (Bay without end) by the Dutch in the 17th century. It's the place to be, if you want a social night out (restaurants, bars and nightclubs).

During the day Grand Bay also offers a wide range of shops and shopping-centers (Sunset Boulevard (pictured right), Grand Bay Bazaar, Super-U), visitors can purchase locally hand-crafted souvenirs.

Its beach is crowded, with many fishing boats. People prefer to eat, shop and go out in Grand Baie, and enjoy its varied surroundings.

Public transport connections are also good.



Mont Choisy

Mont Choisy is very near to Grand Baie. It offers one of the longest natural beaches on the island. The resort area here is also names Mont Choisy. The beach has a very natural feel with many casuarina trees lined along the coast, (pictured right).

The trees have small pine-cone-like seed pod that can be found under the branches. Just be careful where you sit. The beach is easily accessible and it's a favourite among locals and tourists.

The entrance to Mont Choisy Beach is guarded by a monument which commemorates the very first manned flight between Mauritius and near-by Reunion Island. The competition took place on September 10, 1933 in the early days of aviation, between a Frenchman named Sutel and a Mauritian named Jean Hily. The record books do not show who won however sadly, Hily lost his life when attempting the second round, held October 4, 1934



North cont..

Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden

Around 12 km north-east of Port Louis lies what is commonly called the 'Pamplemousses Botanical Garden'.

This 60-acre garden is known to naturalists throughout the world and dates back to 1735, originally only opened as a private garden by the French governor of Mauritius. It has over 600 different species of indigenous and exotic plants, including the giant Victoria Regia water lilies and many species of palm trees. The talipot palm is said to flower once every 60 and thereafter dies. In the 18th century, the famous French botanist, Pierre Poivre spent 5 years to create the Pamplemousses Garden at the request of Governor Mahé de Labourdonnais. Mahé de Labourdonnais at one time even lived in the Chateau Mont Plaisir which still exists in the gardens.

You can also take a tour guide for the garden for a small fee. The tour guide will give you lots of information about the plants. The best time to visit the botanical gardens is between December and April.

Price: Free - Opening times: daily from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm.

Aquarium Maurice

The Aquarium is located on the Coastal Road Pointe Aux Piments. The Aquarium Maurice at Pointe Aux Piments is an exciting place and offers enjoyment to all. The Aquarium Maurice holds numerous tanks and pools. The various buildings contain examples of the rich aquatic life found on and around the island of Mauritius.

The largest tank 'The Deep', is more than 15m long and holds a variety of deep sea creatures, including sharks and a giant moray eel. A "touch pool" allow visitors a chance to interact with a variety of species. Pointe aux Piments also offers stunning views of the natural sea cove. The shop provides special gifts and souvenirs.

Price: Entry fee required.

BalACLava Ruins

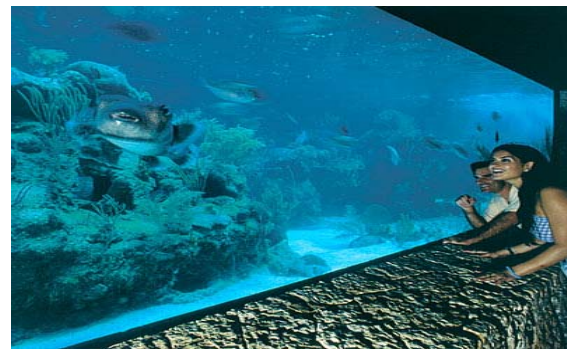
A few metres from Baie aux Tortues, which 17th century sailors named after the many tortoises in the area, you can find the ruins of the old BalACLava estate. Visitors are able to see the sea walls, whose initial foundations were laid down by Mahé de Labourdonnais.

The Labourdonnais Orchards

The Labourdonnais Orchards was set up in 1858 holds a large variety of tropical fruit trees and perfumed flowers. Its in the small village of Mapou, a few kilometres from Grand Baie, the Orchards of Labourdonnais is an essential site that should not be missed.

Greenhouses are filled with a wide variety of anthuriums and beautiful tropical flowers such as the orchids, bougainvilleas and hibiscus. Various unique vegetable patches (lettuces, tomatoes, christophines, etc). Stroll along the paths whilst breathing in the sweet perfume of the exotic fruits (mangoes, litchis and guavas) Before leaving this place, do not forget to drop in at "La Corbeille," to taste the vegetables, fresh fruit and preserves.

Entry is free, and you can hire a bike to get round if you want.



North cont..

Cap Malheureux

Along the intertwining roads of the north visitors can not miss the striking red-roofed church at Cap Malheureux.

'Cape Misfortune' (named for the number of ships that lay on the rocks here) is a place of great historical importance for Mauritius - it was here that the British invasion force finally defeated the French in 1810 and took over the island.

There is a large community of fishermen in the local area.



Gabriel Island

Known also as Îlot Gabriel, is located near the Round Island and the Flat island, at the extreme north of Mauritius, about 10 Km north of Cap Malheureux. The distance between Gabriel Island and Flat Island is only 750 meters. The size of the island is 42 hectares and the highest point is 28 meters.

Gabriel Island is a protected by a natural reserve and is known for its beautiful beaches and crystal clear waters, around the entire island. It is a popular site for snorkeling, it offers great dive sites, and also an ideal day for relaxation on the beach.



Sugar Museum Grand Baie

The Sugar Adventure is located in Grand Baie. The whole island of Mauritius is literally built on sugar. It all started in 1638 when the Dutch arrived and started producing sugar cane on plantations. When the French arrived in 1715 they continued the tradition as did the British when they took possession in 1810.

A few functioning Sugar factories remain today, from as many as 400 originally. The Sugar Museum offers original machinery, film, video, pictures, working models and much more. Sugar tasting available. Ideal place to visit as a family day out.



EAST

A coast of exquisite coves and emerald lagoons permanently enhanced by a cool sea breeze, life goes on at different paces, among the fishing community, the local holidaymaker and inside the top hotels of the island.

The Water Park Leisure Village

Have a memorable day out at the Water Park Leisure Village, with water slides and various fairground rides. Relaxation and pleasure guaranteed. Entry fee required. The Water Park is located on Coastal road, Belle Mare.

Price: Fee required



Flacq Market

Dating back in history Flacq is an important village in Mauritius. This is the country's largest open air market. The extremely thriving market attracts a large number of people. Flacq also offers other tourist shops near-by (Winners) to high quality Mauritian made jumpers.



Ile aux Cerfs

The uninhabited island of Ile aux Cerfs is a tourist haven for water sports and has the most beautiful beach in Mauritius. You cannot afford to miss this tiny island, delicately poised on the ocean, a real pearl in the Mauritian landscape.

Ile aux Cerfs is 20 minutes by boat from Mauritius. The island is equipped with a bar, restaurant and shops, as well as water sport facilities from parasailing to windsurfing. Tickets for boat transfers are available on the spot.



Belle Mare Beach

Despite the numerous hotels on this coast, Belle Mare still offers some precious stretches of public beaches. Ideal for those who want to enjoy the warmth of the Mauritian waters in a tranquil environment.



South of Mauritius

The south reveals a different landscape from the rest of the island with its high cliffs battered by waves.

Mahebourg

Built on the magnificent Grand Port Bay it was founded in 1804 by the French Governor Charles Decaën, you can still find there old colonial buildings and amenities. Mahébourg is also one of the main fishing villages on the island. The recently completed Waterfront is an excellent place to visit with various shops, restaurants and entertainments. The National History Museum is a worthwhile stop this is where British and French Captains were given first aid care during the Vieux Grand port battle in 1810. You can also visit the Dutch Ruins, the oldest settlements in Mauritius. The Frederic Hendrik Museum houses many objects found during excavation during the dutch period. Mahebourg Naval Museum houses many interesting nautical memorabilia.



Domaine du Chasseur

Domaine du Chasseur is 20 minutes away from the SSR International Airport, located at Anse Jonchee, on the south-east coast of the island, at the heart of the Grand Bois Forest. Domaine des Grand Bois has splendid hunting grounds covering an area of 900 hectares and altitude of 300 to 500 meters. Stags, monkeys and boars live along the luxuriant vegetation of the hillside. Visitors can watch evarious species of endangered birds, including the kestrel. The Domaine contains four thatched-roof bungalows and a restaurant with a panoramic sea view.



Domaine L'Ylang Ylang

Located also at Anse Jonchée, the Domaine L'Ylang Ylang is the neighbor of the Domaine du Chasseur. The Domaine L'Ylang Ylang has a unique plantation of some 15,000 ylang ylang trees. The island produces ylang ylang from which the yellow flowers are extracted and distilled in this unique distillation plant for the production perfumes. The Domaine produces pure essential oils, various types of perfumes including ylang ylang , perfumed gifts and accessories. The domain also has a panoramic view over the Bay of Vieux Grand Port and the neighbouring inlets.



Ile aux Aigrettes

Owing to the remarkable work accomplished by the Mauritius Wildlife Fund (MWF) since 1985, the island has become an international standard for the protection of natural resources and endangered species. A few of the world's rarest birds, including the kestrel can be seen here. You can also discover the extremely rare Pink Pigeon, the Green Gecko and the Aldabra giant tortoise. The Telfair Skink, a unique Mauritian lizard, on Ile aux Aigrette has recently been introduced by MWF.

All revenues are reinvested in the conservation work to protect the fauna and flora.



South cont...

Souillac

Souillac is a small seaside resort along the rocky coast in the Savanne district. What makes Souillac interesting is its landscape, it is not a bathing spot. The prominent high cliffs are a back-drop to the rough sea below, it's an area where the sea-breeze is strong.

Gris-Gris

The southern end of the village is the popular view-point of Gris-Gris. A natural cavity found on the cliffs, La roche qui pleure 'the crying rock' provides a wonderful scenery as waves splash into it. You may enjoy a rest at the Telfair Garden overlooking the sea.

At Le Souffleur a geyser of 30 meters high offers, a spectacular jet at high tides and rough seas.



La vanilla Crocodile Park

Near Rivière des Anguilles, in the wild South, is this farm breeding Nile crocodiles imported from Madagascar. This site offers a vast park offering nature walkways through the forest filled with freshwater springs. An insectarium holds 20,000 species of insects and butterflies from around the world.



Rochester Falls

Rochester Falls is well worth a visit. The road leading to the falls crosses a sugar estate. Spectacular joints have been formed by the contraction of the lava due to sudden cooling.



West of Mauritius

Enjoy the best sunset at any of the beaches. The west is the land of adventure for nature and sport lovers.

National Park Flic en Flac

Black River Gorges National Park is a 6,574 hectare park, proclaimed in 1994, it protects much of the remaining native forests of Mauritius and provides opportunities for visitors to enjoy spectacular natural scenery and 311 unique endemic plants and 9 species of birds. Enjoy breath-taking panoramic views.



Albion

Albion is between the capital Port Louis and the major tourist centre of the coast, Flic en Flac. The coastal main roads are an easy way to get there. It is an idyllic location for a tranquil setting away from the crowds of the city centre. Albion has well-preserved beaches, used by local fishermen each morning. Standing on the cliff-top, are amazing sunsets overlooking the Indian Ocean. Albion is best known for its lighthouse a popular tourist destination.



Martello Towers

The Martello Towers represent the scene of the ancient rivalry between old colonial powers. They are a milestone in the island's history. The towers represent the end of slavery and the beginning of Indian immigration. Mauritius has 5 Martello towers. They were built by the British between 1810 and 1846 for defense purposes against their empirical enemies, the French navy.

The Martello tower of La Preneuse (picture lower) was restored in 1999 and is now accessible for guided visits.



Chamarel (Seven Coloured Earth)

A winding road leads from Case Noyale village to the coloured earths of Chamarel. Chamarel has landscape of different colours. The diverse shades of blue, green, red and yellow are apparently the result of the erosion of the volcanic ash. Chamarel is a unique site offering an astonishing dunes. On the way to Chamarel visitors can enjoy coffee plantations the Chamarel Falls approx 100 meters high.



West Cont..

Salt Pans

If ever you wanted to see how salt is formed, the Tamarin district is naturally the heart of salt production in Mauritius. It has exceptional high level of sunshine allowing this district to manufacture salt.



Casela Bird Park

Casela Bird park is situated between Bambous and Tamarin in the River Noire District. More than 140 birds from five continents may be seen there, but the main attraction is the Mauritian Pink Pigeon which is one of the rarest birds in the world. Other attractions include tigers, monkeys, giant tortoises, fish ponds, orchids.

You can discover the fauna by quad bike an adventure that will remain in your memory for ever.

Price: Fee required from Rs125-150 weekdays/weekends.
Opening Times Monday-Friday 9am – 5pm



Yemen

Yemen Reserve may not be the largest game reserve on the island, but there are still lots to see. Quad biking is available at this reserve. You will be able to see herds of deer, as well as admire some splendid species of Mauritian fauna such as the peacock. A few rustic stalls available in the reserve provide an unobstructed view of the sea.

Price: Fee required



Central plate of Mauritius

An unexpected wealth.

The Craft Market at Le Caudan Waterfront

Bags woven of dried grass pile high beneath an expansive ceiling. Vivid prints dance across cotton pareos displayed against tall lime green columns. The radiant hues of the tropics mingle with the evocative handicrafts of this bountiful region in a two-story bazaar. From jars filled with earth-toned spices, to sculptures carved of drift wood, and hand-embroidered linens with red hibiscus and the blue motifs of the sea, a rich stock of authentic items fill dozens of stalls.



Port-Louis

Port Louis the capital and main port of Mauritius, was founded by the French governor, Mahé de Labourdonnais, in 1735. Off the main square, palm-lined Place d' Armes, there are some particularly fine French colonial buildings, especially the Government House and the Municipal Theatre, built around the same period. The La Citadelle, is situated high above Port Louis, there are panoramic views of Port Louis' city and of the harbor. Port Louis also holds the first ever race course in the southern hemisphere. In the city centre visitors can explore the bustling central market. It is advisable to visit the market early, before the heat of the day (it opens from 6am every day including Sundays). There are also shops at The Caudan Waterfront from duty-free shopping, hand-made souvenirs and designer wear.



There are various museums to visit in Port Louis. The best ones are mentioned below. The Natural History Museum (Chaussée Road) houses a reconstructed dodo and many stuffed bird species, rare shells and fish.

A new attraction is the Musée de la Photographie on the (Old Council Road).

The Blue Penny Museum

The Mikado Shell Museum opened in 1972 by Mr. Vic Chakowa. This museum was enriched by the private collection of Mr. Frédéric Descrozilles, a passionate collector since 1950. Mikado Shell Museum exhibits over 3000 shells of the world as well as endemic species from Mauritius.

The museum at Port Louis is on the first floor of Mikado. (Mikado sells jewelry and watches) not far from the central market.

Price opening Times Monday – Friday: 9am– 5 pm. Saturday: 9am – 1pm.



Central cont...

Eureka – Creole Museum

Eureka House, located at Montagne Ory near le Reduit, Moka. Eureka House on a five-acre site is a typical colonial country house built in the 1830's and surrounded by the waterfalls of Moka River and the Moka Range. Eureka House is reputed to be one of the largest houses on the island, with 109 doors and windows. The Eureka house was restored and opened to the public as a museum in 1986. The museum has areas dedicated to music, art, antique maps, Chinese and Indian house wares and quirky contraptions like a colonial-era shower.



L'Aventure du Sucre

L'Aventure du sucre is a modern exhibition situated at the heart of an ancient sugar mill. Visitors can discover the history of Mauritius and its sugarcane adventure exposed over 5000 sq meters.

This excellent museum in the former Beau Plan sugar factory not only tells the story of sugar in fascinating detail, but along the way covers the history of Mauritius, slavery, the rum trade and more. The factory was founded in 1797 and only ceased working in 1999. Most of the machinery is still in place and former workers are on hand to answer questions about the factory's history and the complicated process of turning sugar cane into crystals.

There is a tropical boutique with gifts and souvenirs. The "Le Fangourin" restaurant also offers Mauritian cuisine.

Opening Times Open 7 days a week from 9am - 6pm

Black River Gorges National Park

western entrance is 5km (3.1mi) SE of Grande Rivière Noire Central Mauritius

A network of hiking trails crisscross the wild and empty Black River Gorges National Park. Unfortunately, they're not always well marked, so check the route and trail conditions at the information centers before setting off. Look for the rare tambalacoque (dodo tree), the black ebony trees and the wild guavas. Bird-watchers should keep an eye out for the Mauritius kestrel, pink pigeon, echo parakeet and Mauritius cuckoo-shrike



Le Saint Aubin

The magnificent colonial house Le Saint Aubin built in 1819 offers a unique atmosphere and a 'table d'hôte' in the middle of an exotic garden. Visitors can discover a traditional and typical old Mauritius by visiting the tea factory and the museum at Bois Chéri. The estate produces Vanilla plantations and anthurium greenhouses are also opened for visitors. Discover the traditional Mauritius by following the Tea route that starts from the Colonial house Les Aubineaux in Curepipe.



Central cont...

Bassin Blanc

Bassin Blanc is well known for the scenic lake nestled in a volcanic cone. It is a popular site where Mauritians of the hindu faith converge to pray.



Curepipe (Trou aux Cerfs)

Curepipe is the islands main urban town it's not as busy as the capital Port-Louis, but still offers an excellent place for shopping and many restaurants. The main attraction in Curepipe is Trou aux Cerfs. It's a spectacular dormant volcano 85m deep and more than 200m wide. The extinct volcano has a well-defined cone and crater. Panoramic views of Mauritius can be seen from the rim of the dormant volcano.



Rose-Hill

Rose-hill is the second most commercial of all the towns. It has a number of shopping arcades and a market. An interesting feature of Rose Hill is its theatre, Le Plaza, which has become the most important landmark of the cultural life of the island. Plays, concerts and operas are regularly held within its walls. Next to it is the Max Boullé art gallery where Mauritian artists regularly hold exhibitions.



Phoenix

Phoenix is a lively fast growing town, and offers a large variety of shops including the nearby Jumbo Store (pictured) supermarket (perfumery, clothes, jewelry and eatery). Phoenix is well known for its famous Phoenix beer, produced locally. The Mauritian Glass Gallery is also worth a visit. Visitors can see traditional methods of glass being recycled, it also has a showroom where stained-glass souvenir can be purchased.

Hollywood may boast its 'walk of fame' Mauritius has the 'hand of fame' and is the first country to have replica hand casts of famous celebrities who have visited the country and supported the Helping Hands Foundation moulded in recycled glass.



Central cont...

Domaine les Pailles

Not far from Port Louis is Domaine Les Pailles, a nature park spreading over 3,000 acres at the foot of a mountain range where visitors can discover some old ways of living in an enchanting environment. There are also possibilities of driving in Land Rovers in the mountains where deers, monkeys and rare birds live. Riding in a horse-drawn carriage or in a train is also possible.



Le Val Nature Park

Le Val Nature Park is approximately 20 minutes from Union Park in Plaines Wilhems. Le Val is a natural reserve where giant fresh water prawns called Rosenbergis are bred in ponds and a rich flora consisting mainly of tropical trees, indigenous ferns, wide varieties of anthurium flowers (grown for export to Europe), tropical fruits and legumes. Natural pools, fish, stags, monkeys and tortoises are among the varieties of the Mauritian fauna. The restaurant also offers Mauritian cuisines. Due to the sub-tropical area it is advised to have mosquito repellent cream to keep them away.

Price: entrance fee required

Opening Times:



Quatre Bornes

Quatre Bornes is a pleasant city. It has various shopping centers and hotels. The best known being the Orchard Centre which has a supermarket, restaurants and many shops offering a whole variety of product. Another very popular shopping attraction is Quatre Bornes market, which is held on Thursdays and Sundays. It specialises in textile products that are sold at very attractive prices.



Villa Mauritius Holidays
56 Mountgrove Road, London, N5 2LS

Telephone : 020 8281 3750
Website: www.villamauritus.co.uk
Email : holiday@villamauritus.co.uk

Registered in England and Wales: 4922823 – ATOL 9741