

An aerial photograph of a tropical beach. The left side is dominated by a dense forest of palm trees and other green foliage. A wide, white sandy beach curves along the shoreline. The water is a vibrant turquoise color, with white foam from waves washing onto the sand. In the lower center, two small figures of people are standing near the water's edge. The overall scene is bright and idyllic.

The Seychelles

10 days on board Ventum Maris

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Itinerary

Day 1 | Mahe – St Anne National park

After arrival move out to the St Anne National Park to get straight into the blue waters.

Day 2 | Mahe – Ile St Therese

Anchoring between Mahe and Ile St Therese you can spend the day swimming and snorkelling, on the jetskis or other watersports.

Day 3 | Mahe – Cap Ternay

A day sport fishing in some of the best fishing grounds in the world. Catch something for dinner and we can BBQ on the yacht while you watch the sunset.

Day 4 | Praslin – St Anne Bay

Go ashore to this garden of Eden and visit the Valley de Mai where the coco-de-mer grows.

Day 5 | Praslin – Curieuse Island

A marine natural park, you can snorkel and see the sea life and then go ashore to meet the Giant Tortoises.

Day 6 | Praslin – Cousine Island

Unspoilt paradise island for beachcombing and watersports.

Day 7 | La Digue – Grand Soeur

Snorkelling or watersports to be finished with a beach BBQ on the sand.

Day 8 | La Digue – La Pass

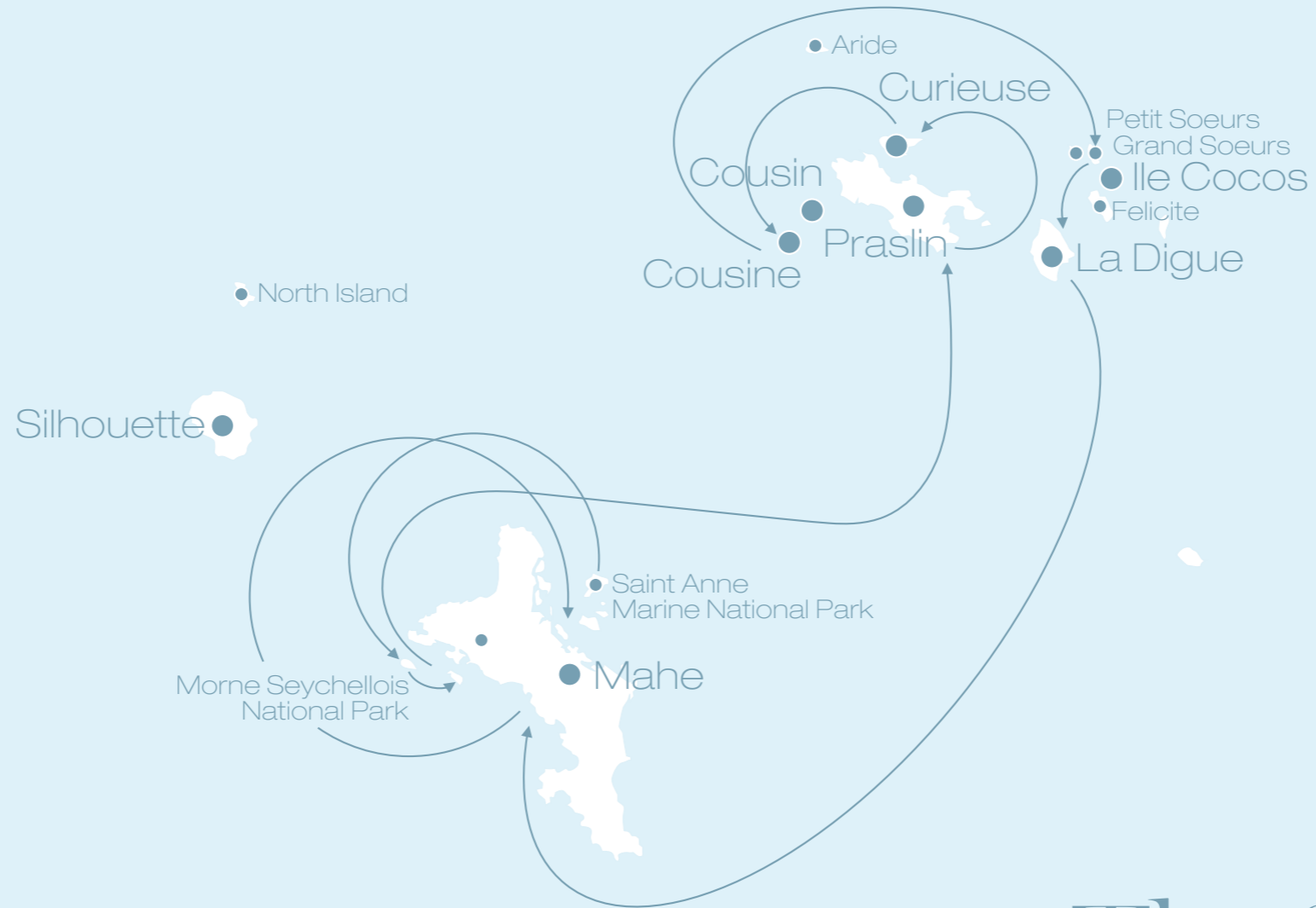
We will get some bicycles for you to tour the island including Le Union Estate and Anse Source D'Argent.

Day 9 | Mahe – Anse La Mouche

Return to the main island, take a tour of the Takamaka rum distillerie or just stay in the blue waters for the last time.

Day 10 | Mahe – Victoria

Time to pick up some souvenirs before saying goodbye to Paradise!



The Seychelles

Mahe

The largest of the Seychelles, Mahe, measuring 18 x 5 miles has the country's capital, Victoria, its airport, a colourful market, well-stocked shops and evening entertainment.

It may be the most developed and populous of the islands – around 90% of the Seychelles islanders live here – but its beauty is unspoilt. With over 65 white sand beaches, numerous dive and snorkel spots and a lush green interior of jungle and granite peaks – the summit of Morne Seychellois soaring almost 1000m above the island – there is plenty to explore.

Sail around the scenic northern tip of Mahe, passing the islet of Ilo (a renowned spot for snorkelling amongst the vast shoals of fish) and a string if secluded coves (Carana, with its palm trees and granite boulders for instance) to Beau Vallon bay with its long sweep of sand. Diving – including to a few wrecks just offshore – is easily arranged here. If restaurants or the casino appeal, this is a good spot to anchor. Nearby Anse Major meanwhile, offers solitude and silence, the beach backed by shady jungle and scattered granite boulders.





Jungle-covered hills, pristine beaches & translucent sea

Continue towards Baie Ternay Marine National Park and Port Launay where the reef, teeming with marine life, is perfect for snorkelling. Between August and October whale sharks are a common sight.

Further south, Mahe's west coast is stunning – jungle-covered hills, meeting pristine beaches and translucent sea. The sleepy fishing villages of Anse Boileau, Grande Anse and Port Glaud offer this coast's only real settlements but the main attraction is the string of white sand paradise beaches, many backed with a welcoming bar or restaurant. Highlights include Anse Takamaka (you can take a tour of the rum distillery too), Petite Anse, Anse Soleil, Anse a La Mouche and – perfect for long waterside walks – Grande Anse.

Sainte Anne Marine National Park



Sitting just east of Mahe's capital, Victoria, these eight islands and islets, the Sainte Anne Marine National Park, established in 1973, was the first of its kind in the Indian Ocean. With its warm emerald water, stunning beaches and colourful coral gardens, it remains a highlight of the Seychelles' Inner Islands.

The views below the water are as good as those above it and divers and snorkellers can expect eagle rays, sea turtles, huge numbers of tropical fish and corals. The seas between Sainte Anne and Moyenne islands offer a particularly rewarding dive destination.

Sainte Anne, the largest of the islands and Cerf boast a number of options for cocktails with a view and local creole speciality feasts.

Several of the islands boast interesting histories with Round Island, a former leper colony (now a 5 star resort), Long Island a smallpox quarantine and Moyenne - bought by the late British newspaper editor, Brendon Grimshaw in 1962 - a national park in its own right and, the stories go, the site of as yet undiscovered pirate treasure.



An undiscovered, wild feel



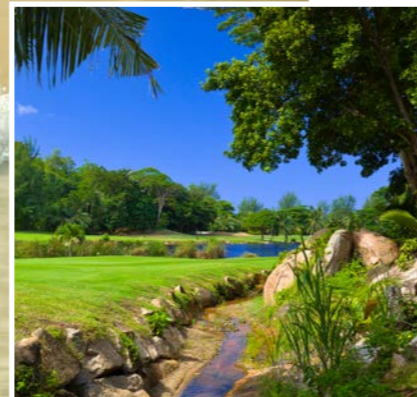
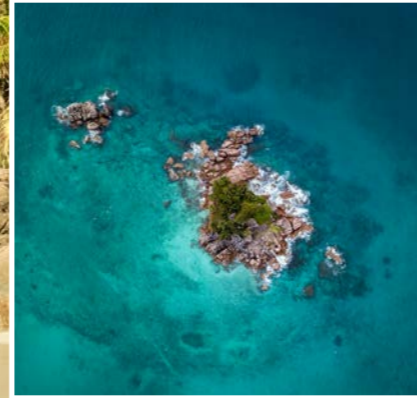
Praslin

The second largest of the Seychelles, Praslin is the archetypal paradise island. Its soft white sand bays come scattered with granite boulders and palm trees, lapped by turquoise water and backed by green-jungle covered mountain peaks.

From the main anchorage at Baie Ste Anne, on the island's southern tip – the best spot for stocking up on provisions – the World Heritage-listed Vallee de Mai is in easy reach. This is one of the two places in the world where the rare and fabled coco de mer palm trees grow naturally. Also a top bird-watching site, the park has a number of marked trails through the welcomingly cool forest.

More activity can be found on water with diving, kayaking and snorkelling all popular and readily accessible.

For most visitors though, swimming and sunbathing is likely to be the main draw, and Praslin's beaches are numerous and pristine. Anse Lazio, regularly voted the world's best beach in travel polls, on the island's northwest tip, is the best known and particularly beautiful as sunset illuminates the granite rocks. Quieter options include the adjacent Anse Georgette, Anse La Blague and, on the island's southern tip, Anse Consolation.





A number of trails through the cool forest

Curieuse

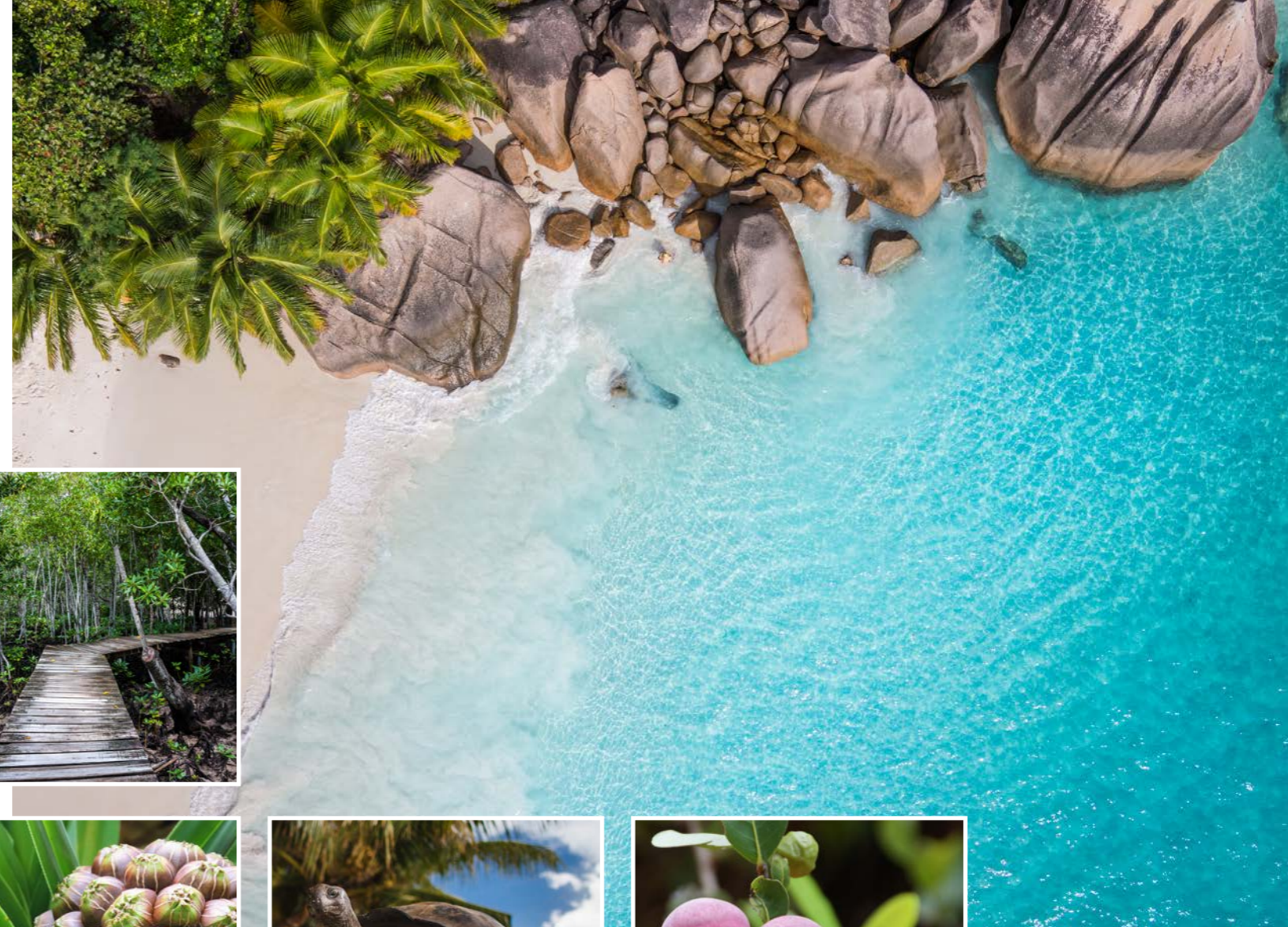
A short sail north of Praslin the tiny island of Curieuse – once a leper colony – is now home to a carefully protected population of around 500 giant Aldabra tortoises as well as Seychelles Black Parrots, Hawksbill and Green Sea Turtles and coco de mer palms.

Anchorage is only permitted in designated areas around Baie Laraie – a fantastic coral-rich spot for swimming and snorkelling alongside the distinctive large parrotfish – from where a path leads through the thick mangrove forest to the stunning, granite boulder strewn beach at Anse Jose, where the sea turtles lay their eggs (hatching in November and December).

Known as Red Island – for the distinctive colour of its soil – until the French renamed it in 1768, Curieuse also offers architectural and historic attractions, in particular the beach-front colonial villa of Dr William Macgregor, physician to the leper colony, and now an island museum.

Guided hiking tours, with the opportunity to feed the tortoises which wander freely around the island, are available.

En route to or from Curieuse, stop and enjoy the crystal clear seas of St Pierre islet, one of the Seychelles' premier snorkelling spots.



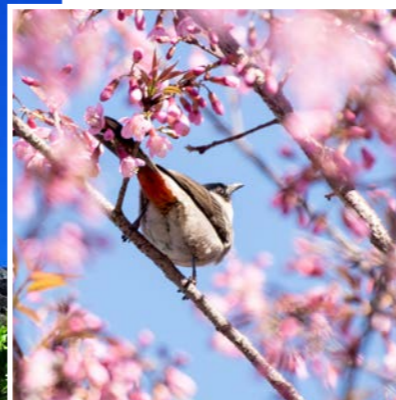
Cousin & Cousine Islands

Sailing for Praslin from Sainte Anne the routes passes the small Marine Park islands of Cousine and Cousin, with designated anchorage available at the latter.

Birdwatchers will be particularly thrilled by the variety of species to be seen on this nature reserve. Just 1km in diameter, Cousin is home to around 300,000 birds. Fairy terns, white tailed tropicbirds and shearwaters are amongst the species living in and around the island's densely forested interior.

Ground and sea dwellers meanwhile include giant tortoises, lizards and hawksbill turtles, who nest and lay their eggs in the island's soft sands between October and April.

Further north, the granite island of Aride, another nature reserve, offers more birdspotting opportunities, seclusion and peace and, of course, a fantastic beach.



La Digue



Laid back La Digue, the third largest of the islands, has an ocean hideaway feel, as well, of course, as offering the Seychelles standards of stunning white sand beaches, emerald green seas, coconut trees and jungle-cloaked hills.

After arriving at the charmingly sleepy little port of La Passe the island's interior can be explored on foot, bicycle or by the distinctive ox-cart taxis (the island is practically car free). The energetic should climb Nid d'Aigle – the Eagle's nest – the island's highest point at 333m, from where the views over the surrounding sea and islands offer ample reward. The island is home to the only remaining population of the black paradise flycatcher, a draw for birdwatchers.

To find out more about the island's one-time chief industry of coconut farming, visit l'Union Estate and Copra Factory in the grounds of the evocative Old Plantation House.

The island's most famous beach, Anse Source d'Argent is the obvious destination – and regularly tops world's best beach polls – with its talcum powder sand, aquamarine water, sea-weathered granite boulders and offshore reef.

Perfection does bring people, so more secluded but almost equally scenic sandy coves – providing excellent deep moorings – are dotted around the island's coastline, with the stretch from Anse Marron, on the southern tip, to Anse Cocos, particularly blessed.

The island boasts numerous renowned dive sites with White Bank, off the northern tip, particularly worthwhile.

Laid back
La Digue,
has an ocean
hideaway feel



Ile Cocos

The Ile Cocos Marine National Park, just off the north coast of La Digue, is a small group of idyllic granite islets, their tiny white sand coves, lapped by warm turquoise water and fringed by coral perfect for snorkelling and diving. Eels, fish, rays, sea turtles and occasional whale sharks are just some of the species living here.

The nearby islands of Felicite, Grand and Petit Soeur also abound with scenic picnic and sunbathing spots and snorkelling sites.

