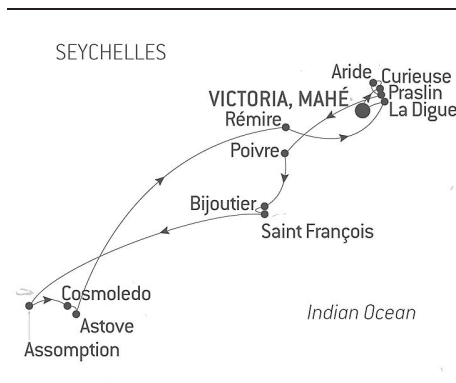


Secret Seychelles islands

From **24/03/2023**
to **05/04/2023**

Ship: **LE JACQUES-CARTIER**

From **Victoria, Mahé**
to **Victoria, Mahé**



Embark with **PONANT** on an **expedition cruise** to discover the most beautiful islands of the **Seychelles**. This 13-day itinerary aboard *Le Jacques-Cartier* will be an opportunity to discover little-known places of breathtaking natural beauty and an original fauna and flora.

Leaving from **Victoria**, the archipelago's capital, fall under the spell of the idyllic landscapes, with their **exceptional flora and fauna**.

On **Curieuse Island**, reputed for its red earth and for the **Aldabra giant tortoises** that have taken up residence there, take an excursion to the heart of the **mangrove**.

Then, you will discover **the island of Aride**, an unspoiled delight of **the Indian Ocean**, home to thousands of birds including some endemic species.

In **Praslin**, do not miss the chance to visit **the Vallée de Mai** Nature Reserve. There you will find **sea coconuts**, gigantic fruits with a very evocative shape, nicknamed the "love nut".

During your cruise, you will have many opportunities to **dive or snorkel**, notably in **Poivre** as well as on the sublime **Saint-François atoll** and the uninhabited and unspoilt **Bijoutier Island**.

Another highlight of your trip will be the port of call at **Cosmoledo**. This magnificent atoll owes its nickname, the **Galapagos of the Indian Ocean**, to the beauty of its unique underwater world. Diving in this paradise lagoon becomes an extraordinary experience.

You will call at **Astove Atoll**. Renowned for the beauty and diversity of its underwater world, it is home to a large population of tortoises and sea turtles. You will undoubtedly have the opportunity to observe some in their natural environment.

Before you return to **Mahé**, *Le Jacques-Cartier* will chart a course for **the coral island of Rémire** and the sublime beaches of **La Digue**, some of the most renowned of the **Seychelles**.

The encounters with the wildlife described above illustrate possible experiences only and cannot be guaranteed.



The information in this document is valid as of 18/08/2022

Secret Seychelles islands

YOUR STOPOVERS :

VICTORIA, MAHÉ

Embarkation 24/03/2023 from 16:00 to 17:00

Departure 24/03/2023 at 23:00

Discover **Mahé**, the main island of the Seychelles and also the largest of the archipelago, home to the capital, **Victoria**. Mahé has almost 70 beaches of fine sand, framed by the emblematic **granite rocks**, and whose crystal clear waters are renowned for their rich underwater life. The island is also famous for its **splendid mountain panoramas** accessible on hikes, such as the Morne Seychellois, which is 905 metres high and overlooks the Indian Ocean. Mahé is also an island full of history where fine colonial properties rub shoulders with **Creole houses** - and don't forget the marvellous **Botanical Gardens** in Victoria.

CURIEUSE ISLAND

Arrival 25/03/2023

Departure 25/03/2023

Situated off the coast of Praslin, **Curieuse** has a distinguishing feature: its red earth. Discovered in 1768 by the French explorer Marc-Joseph Marion du Fresne, it was ravaged by a fire in 1771 and then home to a leper colony of which a few vestiges still remain. Declared a **national marine park** in 1979, it is home to many underwater species, which can be discovered while scuba diving or snorkelling in the idyllic waters of the Indian Ocean. But above all, Curieuse is renowned for the **hundreds of Aldabra giant tortoises** that live there. It is highly likely that you will get the chance to meet these fascinating reptiles. Along with Praslin, it is also the only island on which the **sea coconut** grows wild.

ARIDE ISLAND

Arrival 26/03/2023

Departure 26/03/2023

Aride is an island in the Seychelles situated a few kilometres north-west of Praslin. Listed as a **nature reserve**, this pearl of the Indian Ocean will seduce you with the beauty of its landscapes of **wild cliffs and fine-sand beaches**. Protected from human impact and sometimes called "bird capital", it is home to several endemic plants as well as exceptional wildlife. Most notably, it is the refuge of an impressive number of **seabirds** (Seychelles magpie-robins, terns, noddies, and more), and reptiles, such as Wright's skinks, which can be found in the island's wooded areas. Sea turtles can also be observed on the island's beaches.

PRASLIN ISLAND

Arrival 26/03/2023

Departure 26/03/2023

Situated some forty kilometres away from Victoria, **Praslin** is the second largest island in the Seychelles. Its idyllic beaches where granite rocks nestle in immaculate sand correspond perfectly to how we imagine the Seychelles to be. They invite visitors to dive into the **turquoise waters**, which are ideal for snorkelling. In the centre of the island, hidden in the heart of a stunning tropical rainforest, lies the **Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site**. In this veritable plant sanctuary, several endemic species of palm trees can be observed, as well as the famous sea coconut, which can weigh up to 20 kg and is sometimes called “*coco fesse*” because its shape calls to mind a pair of buttocks.

POIVRE ISLAND

Arrival 27/03/2023

Departure 27/03/2023

At some 200 km south-west of Mahé, discover **Poivre Atoll**, a small paradise that is part of the **Amirantes archipelago**, in the Outer Islands of the Seychelles. Consisting of two **coral islands**, Poivre Island and Ile du Sud, separated by a small **lagoon**, it owes its name to Pierre Poivre, the Mauritius intendant who introduced spices to the Seychelles in the late 18th century. Once used for coconut plantations, Poivre Island is now focused on tourism. Visitors come here for scuba diving or big-game fishing in waters that are particularly rich and clean, where the marine life includes sea turtles.

BIJOUTIER ISLAND

Arrival 28/03/2023

Departure 28/03/2023

Bijoutier Island is one of the three idyllic islands of the Alphonse Atoll, considered the most intact and unspoiled group of islands in the **Outer Islands of the Seychelles**. Formed around volcanos having vanished into the abyssal depths of the Indian Ocean, they are protected by **splendid and fragile coral reefs**. The jewel of the Alphonse Atoll, the Bijoutier lagoon is set with **beaches of coconut trees** bordering this 2-hectare setting, a haven of peace for herons, colonies of frigate birds, tortoises and giant crabs. Since 2007, the natural treasures of this desert island have been preserved by the atoll's conservation centre, which is dedicated to restoring the biodiversity of the island ecosystems.

SAINT FRANÇOIS ISLAND

Arrival 28/03/2023

Departure 28/03/2023

In the heart of the Outer Islands of the Seychelles, St. François paints the Indian Ocean in an infinite palette of blues. This coral atoll covered in coconut trees is exactly what people imagine when they think of the Seychelles. With its distinctive crescent-shaped silhouette, it welcomes you to its immaculate, deserted beaches for a rare experience. Here, the population is composed of myriad birds on land and of sea turtles and a multitude of fish in the water, making this the ideal place for hiking or snorkelling.

AT SEA

Arrival 29/03/2023

Departure 29/03/2023

During your day at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This day without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

ASSUMPTION ISLAND

Arrival 30/03/2023

Departure 30/03/2023

Assumption Island is part of the **Aldabra group** (Outer Islands), situated in the south-west of the Seychelles. Discovered in the mid-18th century by the French captain Nicolas Morphey, this bean-shaped island covered in **dunes** and **shrubs** is relatively flat. A handful of people live there, in a small village in the island's west. The island's beaches are a **major egg-laying and breeding site for sea turtles**. The surrounding waters are ideal for scuba diving. This is where Jacques-Yves Cousteau filmed some of the scenes for his famous documentary film "The Silent World", released in 1956.

COSMOLEDO ATOLL

Arrival 31/03/2023

Departure 31/03/2023

The Cosmoledo Atoll owes its nickname, the **Galapagos of the Indian Ocean**, to the beauty of its underwater world, which attracts the most experienced divers: parrotfish, giant rays and clams inhabit the reefs of its crystal waters. The fascinating marine life comes alive as the multi-coloured fish, making the most of the protection of the extraordinary **coral reef**, come together to feed in the currents formed by the sweeping movements of the tides. Exploited in the past for coconut and agave, the atoll is now uninhabited, apart from an eco-resort in the heart of the **nature reserve**, which shelters green turtles and significant colonies of sooty terns and red-footed boobies.

ASTOVE ISLAND

Arrival 01/04/2023

Departure 01/04/2023

Closer to Madagascar than to Victoria, **Astove** is the **southernmost island** in the Seychelles. It is part of the **Aldabra group**, in the Outer Islands of the Seychelles. Now uninhabited, this **coral island** covered in coconut trees was once home to the employees that worked on the coconut plantations. Renowned for the richness of its seabeds, Astove Atoll is now a top destination for fishing enthusiasts. It also attracts experienced divers, who visit the atoll to explore the "**Astove Wall**", where the sea floor drops to a depth of about 40 metres. The wall is **covered in coral** and many fish and green sea turtles can be found there.

AT SEA

Arrival 02/04/2023

Departure 02/04/2023

During your day at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This day without a port of call will also be an opportunity to enjoy the conferences or shows proposed on board, to do some shopping in the boutique or to meet the PONANT photographers in their dedicated space. As for lovers of the open sea, they will be able to visit the ship's upper deck to admire the spectacle of the waves and perhaps be lucky enough to observe marine species. A truly enchanted interlude, combining comfort, rest and entertainment.

RÉMIRE ISLAND

Arrival 03/04/2023

Departure 03/04/2023

Remire Island is like a piece of confetti in the Indian Ocean and is a captivating place to visit. Located in the **Outer Islands of the Seychelles**, it is prized for its unique biodiversity, including its exceptionally rich underwater life. The rare inhabitants of this **tropical islet** watch over its preservation, and a walk amidst its lush vegetation, home to delightful birds, will delight fans of unspoilt areas. For those who love **snorkelling**, myriad colourful fish live among the coral reefs that border the island.

LA DIGUE ISLAND

Arrival 04/04/2023

Departure 04/04/2023

La Digue Island is a veritable concentration of all the beauty of the Seychelles. Located 6 km south-east of Praslin, this small piece of land that looks like paradise is the third-largest island in the Seychelles, despite its modest size (5 km by 3 km)! Turquoise waters just asking you to swim in them, lush vegetation sheltering **giant tortoises**, beaches of fine sand fringed with coconut trees and surrounded with those emblematic **large granite rocks with their pink highlights** like at the famous Anse Source d'Argent: the perfect picture postcard... **Authentic and preserved**, the island follows a peaceful rhythm, with the only means of transport along its little roads being bikes or traditional oxcarts.

VICTORIA, MAHÉ

Arrival 05/04/2023

Disembarkation 05/04/2023 at 07:00

Discover **Mahé**, the main island of the Seychelles and also the largest of the archipelago, home to the capital, **Victoria**. Mahé has almost 70 beaches of fine sand, framed by the emblematic **granite rocks**, and whose crystal clear waters are renowned for their rich underwater life. The island is also famous for its **splendid mountain panoramas** accessible on hikes, such as the Morne Seychellois, which is 905 metres high and overlooks the Indian Ocean. Mahé is also an island full of history where fine colonial properties rub shoulders with **Creole houses** - and don't forget the marvellous **Botanical Gardens** in Victoria.