

AFRICA · BEACHES · ISLANDS · DIVING · HIKING · CULTURE



Mauritius

Mauritius pairs turquoise lagoons and coral-fringed beaches with a mountainous interior of gorges, waterfalls and tea estates, and a culture blending Indian, African, French and Chinese roots. Le Morne Brabant, a UNESCO-listed refuge for escaped enslaved people, towers over the south-west, and neighbouring Réunion is a short flight away.

i Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Mauritius and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 19 October 2026.

CAPITAL Port Louis	CURRENCY Mauritian rupee (MUR) £1 ≈ MUR 63.14	LANGUAGE Mauritian Creole, French English, Bhojpuri	BEST TIME May–Dec
DAILY BUDGET £45–£280 ££ Moderate	PLUGS Type C, G 230V · UK plugs fit	FLIGHT FROM LONDON 12h direct ~£750–£1,400 return	TIME ZONE UTC+4 standard time

Mauritius is small — about 65km from north to south — but each coast has a distinct character. The north around Grand Baie is lively and built-up, the east has long beaches, big resorts and boat trips to Île aux Cerfs, and the south-west combines Le Morne's kitesurfing lagoon with the Black River Gorges, Chamarel and the island's best hiking. Most visitors choose one or two bases and explore by hired car or driver, adding Port Louis's markets and the botanical garden at Pamplemousses. With more time, a flight to quiet Rodrigues or a hop to Réunion's volcanic peaks makes a natural extension.

Mauritius is often sold as a honeymoon resort island, but independent travel is easy and can be good value: guesthouses, self-catering apartments and roadside dholl puri stalls cost far less than five-star hotels. English is the language of government, while French and Creole are spoken everywhere, so getting by is simple. The island's mix of Hindu temples, mosques, Chinese temples and Catholic shrines is one of its surprises, as is how cool and wet the central plateau can be. Prices peak at Christmas and New Year, and cyclones are possible from about November to April.

Top 5 highlights

- 1

HISTORY

Le Morne Brabant

This 556m basalt mountain sheltered escaped enslaved people in the 18th and early 19th centuries and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hike to the summit with a guide, then cool off in the lagoon, one of the world's top kitesurfing spots.
- 2

NATURE

Black River Gorges National Park

Mauritius's largest national park protects much of its remaining native forest, home to the pink pigeon and echo parakeet, both saved from near-extinction. Trails lead to Alexandra Falls, the Macchabée forest and the island's highest point, Piton de la Petite Rivière Noire.

3

NATURE

Chamarel Seven Coloured Earth

Near the hill village of Chamarel, sand dunes in shades from red and brown to violet and blue-green have formed from weathered volcanic rock. Combine them with the 100m Chamarel waterfall, a rum distillery and lunch in the hills.

4

BEACH

Blue Bay Marine Park

A protected lagoon on the south-east coast with some of the island's best snorkelling over coral gardens. Glass-bottomed boats leave from the public beach, and nearby Mahébourg has a Monday market and a history museum.

5

NATURE

Pamplemousses Botanical Garden

Officially the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Botanical Garden, this 18th-century garden north of Port Louis is famous for its pond of giant Amazon water lilies, towering talipot palms and resident giant tortoises.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Port Louis

≈ 140,000 people

The harbourside capital is busy by day and quiet at night; visit for the Central Market, the UNESCO-listed Aapravasi Ghat immigration depot, the Blue Penny Museum and Caudan Waterfront.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Vacoas-Phoenix

≈ 107,000 people

A sprawling residential town on the cool central plateau, home to the Phoenix beer brewery and large shopping malls; few visitors stop, though Mare aux Vacoas, the island's largest reservoir, lies just south.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Beau Bassin-Rose Hill

≈ 92,000 people

This twin commuter town has Balfour Garden, with views into the Grand River North West gorge, and Rose Hill's busy market streets; worth a brief stop rather than a stay.

Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

When to go to Mauritius

Best time: **May-Dec.**

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

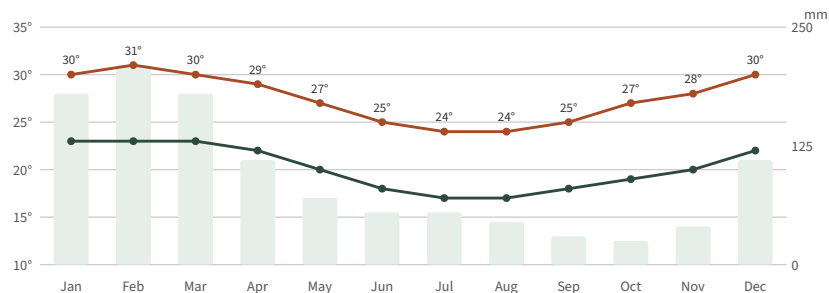
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Port Louis

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Jan–Feb	Thaipooosam Cavadee Tamil devotees fast, pierce their cheeks and tongues with needles and carry ornate cavadee arches in procession to temples across the island; the day is a public holiday.
Feb–Mar	Maha Shivaratri Hundreds of thousands of Hindu pilgrims, many walking from home dressed in white, carry decorated kanwars to the sacred lake of Grand Bassin to make offerings to Shiva.
Oct–Nov	Divali The festival of lights sees homes and streets lined with clay lamps and fairy lights, and neighbours of every faith swap plates of Indian sweets; it is a public holiday.

How much does Mauritius cost?

SHOESTRING £45 per person / day ≈ MUR 2,841 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £110 per person / day ≈ MUR 6,945 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £280 per person / day ≈ MUR 17,679 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Dholl puri Soft flatbreads made with ground yellow split peas, wrapped around butter-bean curry, rougaille and chutney; sold in pairs from street stalls as the island's favourite snack.	Rougaille A Creole tomato sauce with onion, garlic, ginger, thyme and chilli, cooked with salted fish, sausages or prawns and served with rice.	Gâteaux piments Crisp fried balls of split-pea batter spiked with chilli and herbs, eaten hot from roadside vendors, often stuffed into a buttered baguette.
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Getting around

The Metro Express light rail links Port Louis with Rose Hill, Quatre Bornes and Curepipe, and cheap buses reach most villages, though slowly. Most visitors hire a car (driving is on the left) or book a taxi or driver by the day; taxis are unmetered, so agree the fare first. Air Mauritius flies to Rodrigues, and catamarans run day trips to offshore islets.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  C G 230V — UK plugs fit	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Ambulance: 999 or 114 Fire: 999 or 115 Police: 999 or 112 Tourist police: Telephone: 999 or 112 Source: FCDO “Getting help”
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DIALLING CODE

+230

TIME ZONE

UTC+4 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Varies — bottled or filtered is safer

DRIVING

On the left

TIPPING

Not obligatory, and some upmarket restaurants add a service charge. Leaving around 5–10% in restaurants, or a little for drivers and guides, is appreciated.

ETIQUETTE

Mauritius is religiously diverse and fairly conservative: remove shoes and cover shoulders and legs at temples and mosques, keep swimwear for the beach, and note that topless sunbathing is frowned upon.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport (MRU), Plaine Magnien

Visas & entry for Mauritius

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can visit Mauritius without a visa for up to 60 days. When you arrive, a border official will stamp your passport to show the end-date for your permitted stay.

You must be able to show proof of onward or return travel.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Bat Lyssavirus

Typhoid

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Mauritius

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Mon 2 Nov 2026	Arrival of Indentured Labourers
Sun 8 Nov 2026	Diwali
Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Sat 2 Jan 2027	Day after New Year's Day
Fri 22 Jan 2027	Thaipusam
Mon 1 Feb 2027	Abolition of Slavery
Sat 6 Feb 2027	Chinese Spring Festival
Sat 6 Mar 2027	Maha Shivaratri
Wed 10 Mar 2027	Eid al-Fitr (date may shift)
Fri 12 Mar 2027	Independence and Republic Day
Wed 7 Apr 2027	Ugadi
Sat 1 May 2027	Labour Day
Sat 4 Sep 2027	Ganesh Chaturthi

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Mauritian Creole

ENGLISH	MAURITIAN CREOLE	SAY IT
Hello	Bonzour	<i>bon-ZOOR</i>
Thank you	Mersi	<i>mair-SEE</i>
Please	Silvouple	<i>seel-voo-PLAY</i>
Excuse me	Eskiz mwa	<i>es-KEEZ mwah</i>
How much is this?	Konbien sa kout?	<i>kom-BYEN sah koot?</i>

Know before you go

- Réunion is under an hour's flight away and makes an easy add-on for hikers; it uses the euro and has a very different, mountainous feel.
- Cyclone season runs roughly November to April, peaking January to March; buy travel insurance that covers weather disruption, and follow local cyclone-warning classes if one approaches.
- Winds shape the coasts: in the southern winter (June–September) the south-east trade winds make the east and south breezy, so the sheltered west and north are calmer then.