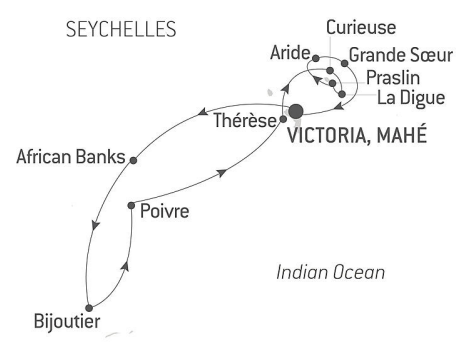


The Seychelles under the trade winds

From **20/02/2023**
to **01/03/2023**

Ship: **LE PONANT**

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



Aboard its emblematic yacht, PONANT is reshaping the contours of expedition cruising and invites you to experience a new way of discovering the wonderful Seychelles, between **granite rocks and coral islets**. Like a soft murmur at the heart of the Indian Ocean, in the ear of the insatiable traveller the wind hums a captivating melody blending African, European and Indian influences. Offering you unique and iconic ports of call and intimate moments, *Le Ponant* takes you to dreamy, wild and idyllic gems where the unexpected brings a delicious sense of freedom.

As the wind catches the sails, **Mahé** fades into the distance, and with it its colourful houses. The gentle way of life invites itself on board and with each port of call the islands of the Seychelles are revealed. Volcanoes buried in the abysses or fragments detached from the continent, each one in turn presents stunning panoramas.

The Amirante Islands reveal themselves, from the **African Banks** and their exceptional underwater scenery to the islands of **Poivre** and **Bijoutier** and their stunning coral atolls. Marvel at the purity of their crystal-clear lagoons lined with fine sand. Under the trade winds, sail to the small, uninhabited **Thérèse Island** and, like a modern-day Robinson Crusoe, experience the exhilaration of first times.

Continue your journey by setting a course for the Inner Islands. Granite rocks reflecting pink and golden hues punctuate the white-sand beaches and their celadon shores with their rounded edges. On **Curieuse Island**, the fascinating and ancient Aldabra giant tortoises move nonchalantly and slowly through the landscape. The abundant flora of **Aride** is home to lizards, sea turtles, and the largest seabird reserve in the Seychelles.

Let the gentle pace of **La Digue** soothe you. The sound of birdsong and the delicate scent of tropical flowers add the finishing touches to this enchanting scene. On **Praslin**, before the gentle backwash invites you to take a quiet pause on **Grande Sœur beach**, you dive right into the island's tropical rainforest, a UNESCO-listed nature reserve.

From one island to the next, these idyllic landscapes invite you to be at

one with the elements. Far from the frenzy of the world, take the time to get back in tune with your senses: melt into the ocean during a **scuba dive** or introduction to **free-diving**, draw in the energy that surrounds you during a **yoga session at sunrise or sunset**, and experience mindfulness during a **meditation**. At your own pace, discover these unspoiled paradises while **paddle-boarding, glass-bottom kayaking, or snorkelling**. Lost in the Indian Ocean, the Seychelles blend their contrasts to perfection: a tropical paradise nestling in a wild and unspoiled natural environment. These biodiversity reserves offer precious moments of exploration and infinite spaces in which to dream.

**The experiences and activities on offer will be confirmed on board by the captain according to the weather conditions, the itinerary and the cruise plan.*



The information in this document is valid as of 06/07/2022

The Seychelles under the trade winds

YOUR STOPOVERS :

VICTORIA, MAHÉ

Embarkation 20/02/2023 from 16:00 to 17:00

Departure 20/02/2023 at 18:00

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.

AFRICAN BANKS

Arrival 21/02/2023

Departure 21/02/2023

Located 30 km (18.6 miles) north of Remire, on the edge of the **Amirantes** Bank, the **African Banks** were discovered in 1797 by Admiral Willaumez, commanding the frigate *La Régénérée*. The group of two islets, separated by a lagoon, forms a pseudo-atoll, their common base being granitic. The coast of these small uninhabited islands appearing only at low tide is gradually being eroded. This former important nesting site for terns and seabirds is surrounded by waters teeming with fish. Renowned among divers, the African Banks boast the most beautiful sea beds visible at such a short distance from the shore: in the east of the North Island is an exceptional drop-off to 300 metres (984 feet). This promises a memorable dive.

BIJOUTIER ISLAND

Arrival 22/02/2023

Departure 22/02/2023

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.

POIVRE ISLAND

Arrival 23/02/2023

Departure 23/02/2023

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.

THÉRÈSE ISLAND

Arrival 24/02/2023

Departure 24/02/2023

Thérèse is an uninhabited island of the Inner Seychelles. From the heights of this tiny island covered in abundant vegetation, the Mahé summits can be seen. Its tropical beach, a 700-metre long (2,300 feet) ribbon of golden sand lined with coconut trees, is one of the most beautiful in the Seychelles. The crystal-clear waters in shades of turquoise edging this piece of confetti in the Indian Ocean are home to numerous species of multicoloured tropical fish. In this stunning setting, away from the world, the myth of Robinson Crusoe can be reinvented.

CURIEUSE ISLAND

Arrival 25/02/2023

Departure 25/02/2023

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.

LA DIGUE ISLAND

Arrival 26/02/2023

Departure 26/02/2023

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.

PRASLIN ISLAND

Arrival 26/02/2023

Departure 26/02/2023

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.

ARIDE ISLAND

Arrival 27/02/2023

Departure 27/02/2023

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.

GRANDE SŒUR

Arrival 28/02/2023

Departure 28/02/2023

Located 6 km north of La Digue, **Grande Sœur Island** is renowned for its two sumptuous beaches and its translucent waters, protected by a coral reef. An ideal spot for **snorkelling** and observing the **sea turtles** that co-exist here with the many multi-coloured fish. The pristine Grande Sœur Island is considered to be one of the most beautiful islands in the Seychelles.

VICTORIA, MAHÉ

Arrival 01/03/2023 early morning

Disembarkation 01/03/2023 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.