

SEYCHELLES

Selection

The original Indian Ocean islands escape, the Seychelles, have generally avoided the mass tourism route that could so easily have destroyed this delightful archipelago. The islands make a great destination in their own right but can also be easily added on to an Africa safari trip. Russell Pilkington and Melissa Hillen know these islands well and have picked their four favourites.



Denis Island Lodge

Russell: Bird Island

Bird Island is an island experience never to be forgotten; the number and variety of birdlife that make this beautiful expanse their home is incredible. This is a world famous breeding site for sooty terns and the numbers during the summer months can swell into the millions. One morning I woke up with a sooty tern on the end of my bed! The snorkelling is wonderful in the crystal clear waters that lie directly afoot the beach, and at times there are hundreds of nesting turtles within close proximity to you. Bird Island is an ornithologist's dream, but is also ideal if you are looking for a picture perfect location in which to relax and get away from it all.

Melissa: Denis Island

Denis Island is one of the coral islands of the Seychelles. It is extremely fertile and part of it is densely wooded with palm trees. There is a small airstrip stretching across the island and only one hotel. Denis Island Lodge is both small and wonderful and serves the most delectable creole food, which tastes even better when you dine on the white-sand beaches! The snorkelling is excellent and you can also scuba-dive and deep-sea fish. It is also extremely interesting to explore the island on foot with many of the paths shaded underneath coconut palms, which also provide a welcome sanctuary for giant tortoises. The tortoises used to wander freely until they took to grazing on the grass runway and not being the most nimble of creatures it became a problem landing the aircraft around them and so now they live happily in their own part of the island.

Russell: La Digue

La Digue is the most photographed island in the Seychelles. As soon as you approach it on the ferry from Praslin you will see why, as the beach coastline is idyllic. The best way to explore the island is by bicycle which is fantastic fun and you are sure to discover some of the best beaches in the Seychelles along the way. I recommend stopping at the L'Ocean restaurant above Anse Patates for a crab curry – the best in the Seychelles. La Digue is a sleepy island where life is very relaxed and has a particularly friendly atmosphere. It's a must for anyone visiting the Seychelles.

Melissa: Praslin

Praslin, a granitic island and the second largest in the Seychelles, is still only seven miles long and just under three miles wide. In addition to its stunning white-sand beaches, it is famous for the Vallee de Mai forest where a botanical rarity, the coco-de-mer palm, grows wild. In the forest you may also spot the rare black parrot, only found on this island. Praslin is surrounded by coral reef making the diving and snorkelling fantastic. It is a quiet island and has a rare wild beauty about it.

All these islands have the common theme of fantastic beaches, tasty seafood and superb opportunities for underwater exploration. Ideal for wildlife and marine-life enthusiasts, honeymooners, and those who just want to flop on a beach with a good book!



Public Transport, La Digue



Giant Tortoise, Denis Island



La Digue Island Lodge



Denis Island Lodge



Lemuria Resort, Praslin

FACT FILE

A ten day trip to the Seychelles including flights and time on Praslin and Denis Island costs from £2,750 per person. For details of this or other travel to the Seychelles please contact Russell or Melissa on 01993 838 515.

