

An aerial photograph of a tropical island, likely in Mauritius. The island is covered in lush green vegetation and features a prominent white lighthouse on its highest point. The surrounding waters are a vibrant turquoise, with visible coral reefs and sandy patches. The sky is a clear, deep blue with some light, wispy clouds. The overall scene is idyllic and scenic.

WELCOME TO
MAURITIUS
CHRISTIAN ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1. SHORT HISTORY	2
2. CLIMATE.....	3
3. LAWS	3
4. ECONOMY.....	3
5. PEOPLE.....	4
6. CHURCH IN MAURITIUS.....	5
7. RECOMMENDATIONS	6
8. TRANSPORTATION.....	7
9. IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS.....	8
10. WHAT TO DISCOVER	9
11. WHAT TO BRING.....	9
12. LANGUAGE LESSON.....	10

SHORT HISTORY

Mauritius is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean east of Madagascar. The land has a total area of 2,040 km² (788 mi²) and a total coastline of 177 km (110.0 mi). This land area is about 1.6 times the size of Los Angeles. Mauritius is thus one of the smallest countries in Africa by area and ranked 181st worldwide. With 621 inhabitants per km², it is also one of the most densely populated countries. Only slightly less than half of all residents (41%) live within cities.

The highest elevation in the country (Piton de la Petite Rivière Noire) is 828 meters. The archipelago consists of about 70 islands.

Mauritius was successively a French and a British Colony during the period 1715-1968. Prior to the French settlers there has been the Dutch, Portuguese, Arabs and Malays who never wished to colonize or were unsuccessful in colonizing the island. Arabs and Malays visited Mauritius during the 10th century while the Portuguese landed in the 16th century. The Dutch set foot on the island in 1638 and the island was named in honor of Prince Maurice de Nassau. The Dutch settlement lasted only 25 years and the Dutch abandoned the Island in 1710 after 2 unsuccessful attempts of colonisation.

The island was renamed Ile de France under the French rule, starting in 1715. Under the impetus of the French Governor Mahé de Labourdonnais boat construction spurred and the merchant fleet grew to a substantial size.

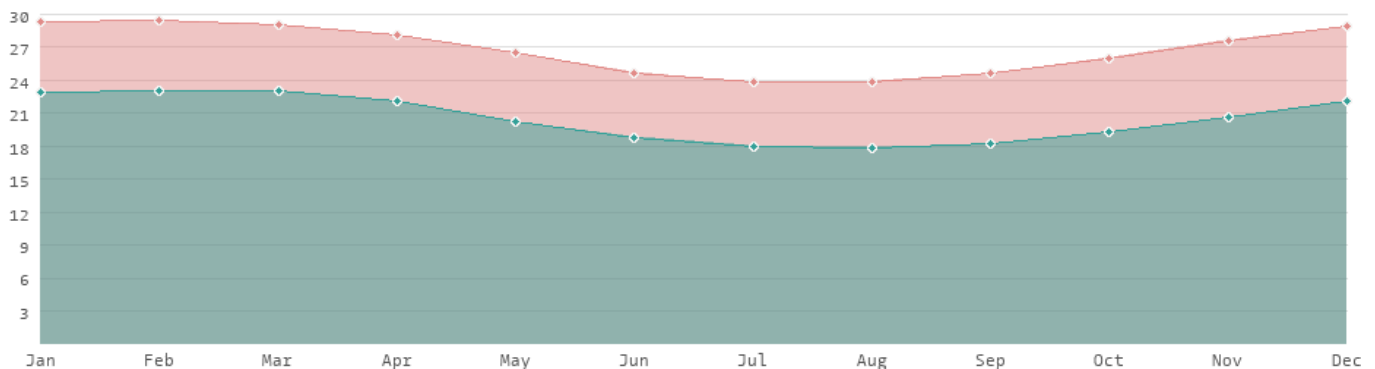
The island saw a further improvement in the number of merchant fleet under the British who captured the island in 1810 and renamed it Mauritius. The island was declared a British colony four years later by the Treaty of Paris and remained under British rule until 1968 when the island became independent. In 1992 Mauritius was declared a Republic and is a member of the Commonwealth of Nation.



CLIMATE

In Mauritius, as in all equatorial countries, there is a tropical climate. Unlike in Europe or the USA, there is almost no difference between the seasons. The daylight hours vary little, and the temperature differences between summer and winter are also lower. Depending on the season, the average daytime temperatures range between 24 and 29 degrees. In some parts of the country, the temperature rises to 31 °C. In the colder months, and depending in the region, the temperature drops to 18 °C in a month's average. There can be some cyclones or heavy rainfall in summer (November to March).

Average daytime and nighttime temperatures



LAWS

Both the French and British influence are still prevalent in Mauritius today. Besides the English and French languages which are widely used, the Code Napoleon forms an important part of our legal system but with strong overlap of English Law modified by local enactments. This situation has over the years, created a hybrid system of law derived from both French and English sources. Commercial Law, Company Law, Criminal procedure and the Law of evidence are almost exclusively English, while the Code Civil, the Code de Procédure Civile and the Code de Commerce follow French Laws with some changes brought over time to suit local conditions. Mauritius has also inherited a Westminster type of Government, a Constitution, a Civil Service and a British type of education system.

Mauritius is ranked 28th in the 2022 Global Peace Index (GPI) thus making it the **safest country in Africa**. Carrying any type of weapons by civilians is forbidden.

ECONOMY

Since Independence, Mauritius is no more a sugar producing island only. Due to diversification of the economy, the island entered into a new phase of its development. There has been a shift from a one-crop industry i.e. sugarcane to textiles, tourism, agriculture, offshore business activities and shortly to an IT development centre which will become the sixth pillar of the economy. There is also the seafood hub initiative which aims at developing Mauritius into a platform for the storage, processing, and distribution of fresh, chilled, and frozen raw or processed seafood.

Mauritius is also very committed to the achievement of sustainable and equitable development which represents a challenge especially where half of the countries in the African continent rank among the least developed and poorest on earth. Mauritius is favourable to the promotion of the region as a single destination for investment, through well-established regional organisations.

Among the other notable measures initiated by Mauritius are the signature of multilateral and bilateral trade agreements, Promotion of the Double Tax Avoidance Agreements to promote trade and investment through the removal of double taxation on the same income, provision of lower tax rates on certain incomes and last but not least providing certainty to business regarding their tax liabilities and the introduction of Regional Development Certificates to promote lucrative development projects.

GDP:	11.53 bn \$	Exportations:	3,088.4 M \$
Importations:	5,224.9 M \$	Tourism receipts:	518.00 M \$
Unemployment rate:	7.4 %	Inflation rate:	4.03 %
Corruption index:	54 (moderate)	Energy consumption:	2.7 bn kWh

*according to statistics of 2021

According to the definition from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mauritius is a developing country because of its lower economic performance. With a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.802, Mauritius counts as one of the **high developed economies** by UN definition.

Alliances:	African Union	Non-Aligned Movement
	Commonwealth of Nations	G33 - Forum for developing countries
	UN - United Nations	UNESCO
	WTO - World Trade Organization	

The currency in Mauritius is the **Mauritian rupee** (MUR) and 1 Rupee is divided into 100 Cents.

1 US dollar = 44.10 Rupees 1000 Rupees = 22.68 US dollar (Status: 01/21/2023)

PEOPLE

As there was no indigenous population in Mauritius, since the French colonization, Mauritians are composed of ethnicities mainly from Asia, Africa and Europe. Most Mauritians accept that, to some extent, they are all 'mixed' as in the history, many ancestors married or had children with people from other ethnicities. The main ethnicities are:

- Mostly Indian origin (whose most ancestors came from different part of India – including the region now known as Pakistan – to work in Mauritius after the abolition of slavery. They can be of Hindu, Muslim or Christian faith even if they all have an Indian culture influence).
- Mostly African origin (whose most ancestors came from Africa mostly due to slavery).
- Mostly Chinese origin (whose most ancestors came from China to work and develop businesses in Mauritius since colonial times).
- Mostly European origin (whose most ancestors came from European countries since colonial times).
- Very mixed origin (those who have ancestors coming from at least 2-3 different continents/origins).



- Expat (those who recently came to live in Mauritius for work, business and retirement – many of them are South Africans who live in the North or the West of Mauritius – and who usually use English to communicate with other ethnicities).

With all these mixtures of cultures and ethnicities, we can say that there is a variety of cultures in Mauritius. Although, in general, Mauritians can be considered as a country with a more Asian culture influence.

In general, we can say that Mauritians speak mostly Creole language, but listen mostly in French, and write in English. For majority of Mauritians, their mother tongue is Mauritian Creole (which is a mixture of English basic grammar with words from several other languages like French) which they speak at home and among friends. As Mauritius is considered a Francophone country due to the French colonization and influence, most of the programs on TV, radio and even movies at the cinema are in French so people are used to listen in French. As a heritage of British colonization, the **official language is still English** and most of the subjects in governmental and private schools are in English (even if English is not usually Mauritians' mother tongue).

Languages

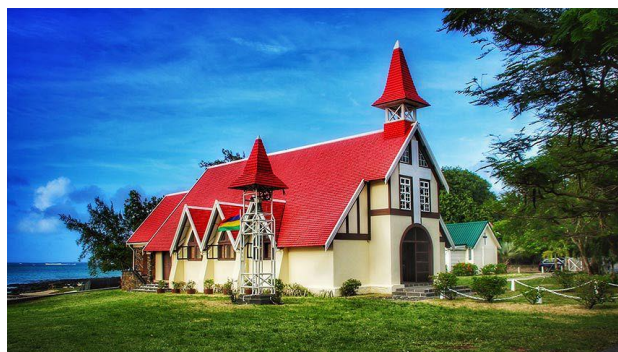
Mother tongue	Distribution
Creole	86.5 %
Bhojpuri	5.3 %
French	4.1 %
Hindi	1.2 %
Tamil	0.8 %
other	2.1 %

Religions

Religion	Distribution
Roman Catholics	26.3%
other Christians	6.4%
Hinduists	48.5%
Muslims	17.3%
nondenominational	0.7%
other	0.8%

CHURCH IN MAURITIUS

Even if, according to the last public census, the majority of Mauritians considers themselves as Hindus, Mauritius was a Christian majority nation since the colonial times until 1968. When Mauritius got its independence from the United Kingdom, there was almost half of the population who wanted to stay 'British' and thus, many Christian families left the Island to live in England, Australia or Canada while many Hindu and Muslim families from India continued to come and live in Mauritius.



Since the colonial times, Christianity was always respected in Mauritius as Mauritians are, usually, very religious and pious. Since its independence, the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian denominations are officially respected as religions by the government. But there are several other denominations and Christian communities which were planted & started all over the Island.

You can discover the different Christian communities/ denominations and get their contacts on this link: <https://daybreak-academy.org/churches-in-mauritius/>

There are nowadays several Christian communities (churches and home groups) which prefer to consider themselves as 'non-denominational'. There are also several Missionary Christian organizations (like Bible Society, Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth With A Mission, Child Evangelism Fellowship, Scripture Union, Youth for Christ, Chemin Neuf community, etc.) who are active and present in Mauritius.

Since 1967, there were several churches/denominations which were started by taking people from other churches to start their own and this led to much mistrust and division among churches. But since 2005, several initiatives and networks were developed to encourage tangible Kingdom collaboration (Love & Unity) across denominations but there is still a long way to go. There are still many prejudices towards one another and this is why it is good to be aware of this situation and be wise and cautious when associating with any denomination/ church.

If you would like to discover about various Interdenominational initiatives, networks & partnerships in Mauritius, click on this link:

<https://daybreak-academy.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Interdenominational-initiatives-Mauritius.pdf>

Some churches in Mauritius may appear conservative and legalistic to you, and others may look very charismatic. Not every church has the same views, but it is better to start more conservatively and follow the lead of people who attend these churches.

We hope you can withhold your judgment and instead seek ways to be an encouragement. We hope that your time here will not be a stumbling stone, but a way to learn about different cultures and celebrate the unity of God's creation in different nations!

RECOMMENDATIONS

NO-NO'S ... are Drinking, Smoking, Drug use, Gambling or using violent language (swearing). Mauritians are usually used to see people in all types of clothes and swimming suits (even bikinis) at the beach but, in general, you are encouraged to dress modestly: please no short shorts/skirts, no low necklines, no small (spaghetti) straps or length so short that your stomach (or underwear) shows!

LANGUAGE - In general, everybody around the Island grasps/ understands English and you can communicate with most Mauritians. But please do not expect them to be able or confident to use foreign languages (as many of them are not used to speak in English). Feel free to ask someone to translate for you. You will find some helpful phrases in the Language Lesson further in this booklet.



GREETINGS – Before COVID Mauritians usually shake hands when they meet. Among friends and relatives, kissing on both cheeks and hugging is common. But since COVID, you can still expect people to greet you as such but if you prefer just to keep your distance or do a fist-bump, feel free to do so. The French greeting 'Bonjour' (Good day) is a commonly used term. English greetings are also acceptable.

ELECTRONIC & MULTIMEDIA DEVICES (Hairdryer, Curling Iron, MP3 player, mobile phone, laptop etc.) - You can bring them, but you are responsible for them and there may not be a good place to keep these things on outreach. Remember technology is not as available to everyone as it may be in your home country, particularly in the villages here. Out of sensitivity, it is our recommendation that you do not bring everything with you. Remember that the electrical system in Mauritius operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz (and not the US 110 V). The standard socket available is the 3-pin one (as in UK). Check to be sure your device can handle 220V without a converter. Converters can be heavy to pack. Electrical plug adapters can be used for plug compatibility, but not electrical compatibility.

MOBILE PHONES - You may need a SIM card specific for Mauritius while you are here (to call anytime your partners in Mauritius as many are not always online or to have internet packages). Or check with your service provider for overseas options. US phone might not work in Mauritius.

It would be a shame if you had to deal with an expensive roaming bill because you decided to roam internationally and not use a local SIM card, which is almost always cheaper than roaming. Fortunately, Mauritian SIM cards are affordable and available to travelers. You can get a Mauritian SIM card in Mauritius Telecom Shops (for my.t), or Emtel & Chili (by MTML) throughout the country by registering it using your passport. SIM cards are also available at the Airport.



There are nowadays several hotspots all over the Island where you can have **access to FREE WIFI** (such as municipality/ government centers, McDonalds, cafés, restaurants, etc.) so do not hesitate to ask people working there if you can have access to their WIFI.

While it is good to stay in touch with home during your time in Mauritius, we recommend you to consider limiting your texting and chatting so you can be more present with people as for many Mauritians, it can be considered as rude being on your phone while being with them.

INTERACTION WITH MAURITIANS - Mauritians are usually very warm, welcoming and have the tendency to be non-confrontational and thus, do not expect them to argue/ fight with you. They prefer to avoid conflicts and this is why, it can happen that some Mauritians will not tell you directly when they do not agree with you or if something is wrong. They can sometimes ask somebody else to talk to you about a problem/issue they have with you. It can be hurtful but remember that it is their way of 'avoiding conflict' and the intention is not to hurt you.

Many Mauritians can be considered quite 'shallow' as they do not go directly into 'deep' talks but keep in mind that they need to build trust and relationships with you before going 'deeper'. And this applies also for Mauritians of various faith who usually respect one another. This is why several Mauritians do not dare to share their faith to other non-believers out of 'avoiding conflict' or 'respecting others'.

Mauritians can tend to take pictures/ videos or stare at your beautiful children without asking for permission. If you feel uncomfortable, please kindly ask them not to do so.

TRANSPORTATION

TRAFFIC - Drives on the left. So if you have an international license, you are recommended to rent or get a car to easily travel throughout Mauritius. Google map app is quite efficient in Mauritius.

Public Transport - Buses - If you're looking for a fun, cheap way to explore Mauritius, then bus transportation is the answer for you. The bus routes crisscross the entire island and you'll also have the chance to meet the chatty local people.



There are two types of buses in Mauritius: Standard and Express. Use the express ones if you can. They are often air-conditioned and much faster since they don't stop every few meters like the standard ones do. Buses operate from 5.30 am - 8.00 pm in built up areas and 6.30 am - 6.30 pm in the countryside, however there's also a late service between Port Louis and Curepipe until 11:00 pm. Usually, there are buses every fifteen minutes or so on the major routes. Express buses are less frequent. In country areas, buses can be few and far between.

Keep in mind that there is no direct bus from one end of the island to another so you might need to transfer. To make things even more complicated, there are 2 main bus stations in Port Louis: one for buses going to the south of the island (Victoria square), and another one for buses going to the north (Immigration square). There is a bus shuttle between the two stations, but the distance can also be walked.

How much does it cost to take a bus? A bus ticket is cheap: from 25 Rs (\$0.5) for a short trip to 45Rs (\$1) for a long one, so you might want to keep some change in your pockets. The express buses often have an air-conditioning system, but you will be charged extra for that little cold breeze.

Where can I purchase the bus ticket? You can buy the tickets from the conductors and you will need to keep the ticket as there are inspectors that often get on-board. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as an operator independent ticket which could be used across the island, so you will need to buy a ticket each time you get on a bus. When you want to get off, you're expected to press the buzzer beforehand. Even though the buses are in different states of disrepair, the fleet is gradually being upgraded.

There are two main companies that operate throughout the island: the United Bus Service (UBS) and the National Transport Corporation (NTC), known also as the "blue bus". The only downside to the bus is that your trip will take longer than with a car/taxi, as every time someone needs to get on or off, it means another stop.

Plan your trip: You can visit <http://www.mauritius-buses.com/> and find the most suitable route for you!

NTC (National Transport Corporation) - Tel: 426 2938

UBS (United Bus Service) - Tel: 212 2028

Metro - Since some years, Mauritius has started to develop metro system which is connecting the main cities and is keeping on expanding to other regions. For more info about the locations available and fares, see this link: <https://mauritiusmetroexpress.mu/my-journey/?lang=en#trajet>

Taxis - These can be hired at any taxi stand. The taxi fare should be discussed before starting the journey. Fares vary but they are quite expensive. Bargain before accepting the price the taxi driver gives you! Uber services are not yet available in Mauritius but you can book a taxi directly on this link: <https://www.mo.taxi/>

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Medical	114	Fire and Rescue Services	115
Police	999 or 112	Child Protection	113
Passport and Immigration Office	260 2073	SSR International Airport	603 8000

In emergency situations, you can contact the local police, ambulance service, fire department and other emergency services by calling **999**.

You can also discover and get the contacts of various embassies in Mauritius on this link: <https://foreign.govmu.org/Pages/Embassies%20and%20Consulates/Foreign%20Diplomatic%20Missions%20Based%20in%20Mauritius/Foreign-Diplomatic-Missions-Based-in-Mauritius-Main-Page.aspx>

If you need any practical support or help (Member care services), you can contact Daybreak on (+230) 59467517 or 59094571 (also available also on WhatsApp & Signal).

WHAT TO DISCOVER

If you wish to discover the culture of Mauritius, you should immerse yourself in the richness of its gastronomy. Incorporating Indian, French, Chinese, and African influences, Mauritian cuisine is one of the most unique fusions of flavors in the world. We encourage you to try different food such as Dhol Puri, Magic bowl, fried noodles, Boulettes, Haleem, Biryani, Alouda, Napolitaine, etc. which are usually available throughout the Island. More info on: <https://www.chefspencil.com/popular-foods-mauritius/>

As one of the main activities in Mauritius is Tourism, there are a lot of different activities, beaches, mountains, nature walks, hikes and historical sites awaiting you. You can discover many of them on this link: <https://www.discovermauritius.app/page-map/c/0> or <https://letsdiscovermauritius.com/places-to-go-in-mauritius.html>



If you want to have a better idea of what Mauritius looks like, here is a short video about the main Island: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUgG4-ts2IU&t=194s>

WHAT TO BRING

No doubt, it is hard to pack to go somewhere you have never been before! We have a list and some suggestions for you as well as information about what is appropriate here. We hope this makes packing easier and give you some insight into what you can expect from your time in Mauritius!

One thing to remember while packing is that while it may not be like your home country, nearly everything you may need is available here. Don't over-pack. If you forget something, you will still make it!

- Bible
- Small bag to pack for day trips
- Clothes (season specific)
- Church clothes (girls: skirt or dress; boys: long trousers)

- Swimming suit/short, sun-glasses
- Could be good to bring a waterproof jacket or umbrella
- Comfortable shoes
- Basic Toiletries
- Medication (if needed)
- Sunscreen & Mosquito spray
- Small gifts from your country (to give as souvenirs to the new friends you will make)
- Optional: Pictures of home & culture
- Optional: Your country flag

LANGUAGE LESSON

Here are some useful sentences (in English & Mauritian Creole) which can be helpful to connect with people while you are here:

Hi (non-formal)	Korek
How are you? (non-formal)	Ki pozisyon?
Good morning	Bonzour
Good evening	Bonswar
Good night	Bonwi
My name is...	Mo apel
I am from...	Mo vinn depi...
Do you speak...English or French?	Eski ou koz Angle ouswa Franse?
I don't speak Creole	Mo pa koz Kreol
Nice to meet you	Mo kontan mo finn zwen ou
God bless you!	Bondie beni ou
Thank you	Mersi
You're welcome	Padkwa
Goodbye	Aurevwar

P.S: If you speak some French, feel free to speak it as almost everybody understands it well.

REFERENCES

- <https://blueconomy.govmu.org/Pages/Departments/Shipping%20Division/Short-History-About-Mauritius.aspx>
- <https://www.worlddata.info/africa/mauritius/index.php>

