

# More African product to sell, as demand continues to grow



Image credit: Adventure Destinations

African wholesalers are expanding their product range to meet growing demand, following the successful World Cup in South Africa.

By Jenny Burns

**A**FRICA continues as one of the more tempting destinations for Australians to visit, with all major players reporting strong demand. In response, a number of wholesalers have increased the size of their African brochures.

South Africa is one of the biggest winners, after its success in staging the FIFA World Cup, but all other destinations are also reporting strong sales.

According to South African Tourism (SAT), Australia was number three in the world in terms of World Cup ticket sales with around 47,000 tickets being sold.

"We believe that the exposure on South Africa and our product offering

to prospective tourists thanks to the World Cup has created a great opportunity for the South African tourism industry, and certainly a boost from the Australian market," said outgoing general manager Australasia, Bangu Masisi

"We have seen an increase in inquiries on sporting tours, business tourism and large-scale event management which we believe are all a direct result of the World Cup.

"In March 2010 we saw a 21.2 per cent increase in visitor arrivals compared to the same month in 2009; and from January to March, we had a 7.2 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2009 – showing that even prior to the World Cup we were in a strong position for month on month visitor arrivals growth from the Australian market.

"Over the coming months we are aiming to reach similar visitor levels as in 2008, to finish off the year ahead of our record of over 100,000 visitors annually."

African Wildlife Safaris (AWS) is one of a number of companies reporting strong interest in Africa.

"We have seen an increase in business over this financial year of 40

per cent in Africa," said CEO Stephen Cameron. "We can't see it slowing down anytime soon if the Australian dollar continues to stay strong."

To meet demand, AWS has increased the size of its Africa brochure from 100 to 116 pages.

Bench International is also reporting strong demand.

"2010 has been an exceptional year for Bench with revenue hitting a new record high and volume being higher than for many years," said product director Fiona Orton.

"Travellers to Africa are tending to stay longer and we are actively involved in tailor-making individual itineraries for them as the choice of options is now so broad.

"We have been pleasantly surprised by the market acceptance of more expensive fly-around itineraries we have this year introduced to Kenya and Zimbabwe. The latter continues to grow as more good quality infrastructure comes along."

New Horizons Holidays managing director Gary Hilt expects interest in South Africa to increase dramatically

over the next 12 months.

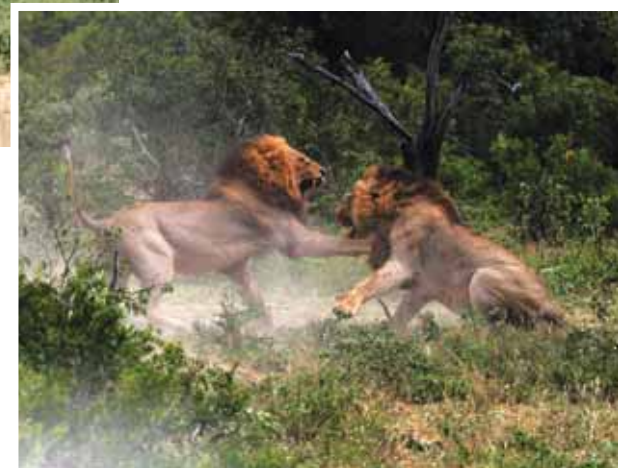
"The destination is firmly on the map after the World Cup – the feedback from those attending was so incredibly positive," he said.

"South African Tourism recently worked on trade exposure with the Roadshow around Australia, and with a positive vibe emanating from all areas, we believe that sales in the region should increase rapidly."

Adventure Destinations managing director Anita McGaw said in general bookings to Africa had increased during the World Cup.

"Our reservations continued quite strongly over the World Cup period, however there was a significant turnaround in preference of countries being visited, as most of our bookings for this period were for East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania)," she said.

"We are still noticing that clients are either booking within a very short time frame, that is within six to eight weeks or their travel is for 10 to 12 months ahead."



Savanna Lodge Safari (image credit: AWS)

Adventure Destinations has also increased the size of its brochure from 36 to 48 pages to cater for increased demand.

African Travel Specialists managing director Richard Ruskin said the company has had an amazing year, with huge growth in East Africa and South Africa.

"Post World Cup, traditionally a down time, has surprised us with a growth in bookings from the previous year," he said.

"Our forward bookings for 2011, especially for groups, has surpassed any previous year and our planned escorted safaris are also looking very strong especially for the season (July to October). Special interest escorted safaris like our photographic safaris are also showing strong demand."

*sellingAfrica*

## Mauritius 'really does look like the brochures' says Vini

A RECENT familiarisation with Beachcomber Tours has resulted in Mauritius appearing on the radar of international travel consultant Vini Becha.

"I really hadn't sold much Mauritius product before the famil, but now I know all it has to offer I am already recommending it to my clients," said Vini, who works at Escape Travel's Bourke Street Melbourne store.

She believes it is a great stand-alone destination and also the perfect stopover for clients travelling to other parts of Africa, especially given Air Mauritius airmiles, or Europe.

Highlights of Vini's trip included seeing the many different resorts available and a walking with the lions tour.

"I had only seen pictures of the resorts in the brochure so it was great to experience them firsthand," she said. "There are some fantastic resorts on offer and Beachcomber offers a range of standards and prices.

"Walking with the lions was a truly amazing experience, I must admit to being a little scared and went very quiet, but it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

"Then there was Mauritius itself, unlike some places it really does look like it does in the brochures. The water is a beautiful colour.

"I can see it really appealing to my clients looking for an island holiday. The only disadvantage is its distance from Australia, but once you are there, the standard of accommodation and its many other advantages make it worth the effort. We felt very safe, it was clean and the people were extremely friendly."

## Adventure Destinations introduces Mali to expanded brochure

ADVENTURE Destinations has increased the size of its Africa brochure from 36 to 48 pages.

The 2011 brochure includes a section on Mali and a number of new products.

"We have introduced Mali as we like to encourage other African countries to our product range each year and we have received a significant number of enquiries this year for Mali," said managing director, Anita McGaw.

New tours include the 21 day "Cairo to Cape Town" tour which includes three nights in Cairo, a four-night Nile cruise and stays in famous game reserves of East Africa, including Samburu, Lake Nakuru and the Masai Mara. The tour ends in Cape Town.

The "Primates and The Serengeti" is a 15-day tour which includes gorilla trekking, game viewing in Uganda and in Ngorongoro and Manyara national parks in Tanzania.

Shongololo Africa Train Cruises has re-introduced the Dune Express from Johannesburg to Windhoek, and Adventure Destination has included this trip in the brochure. Mt Kilimanjaro trekking is another new product

"In addition we have some great value-for-money family safaris and some exciting new camps/lodges," McGaw said.



Mount Kilimanjaro Climb – Machame Route

"These include Camp Kuzuma (Botswana) which is located overlooking the open plains of the Kuzuma Pans with an area space of 35,000 hectares. Accommodation is in ensuite tents which have each been designed individually to capture the 1800s era and centres around an icon of the time."

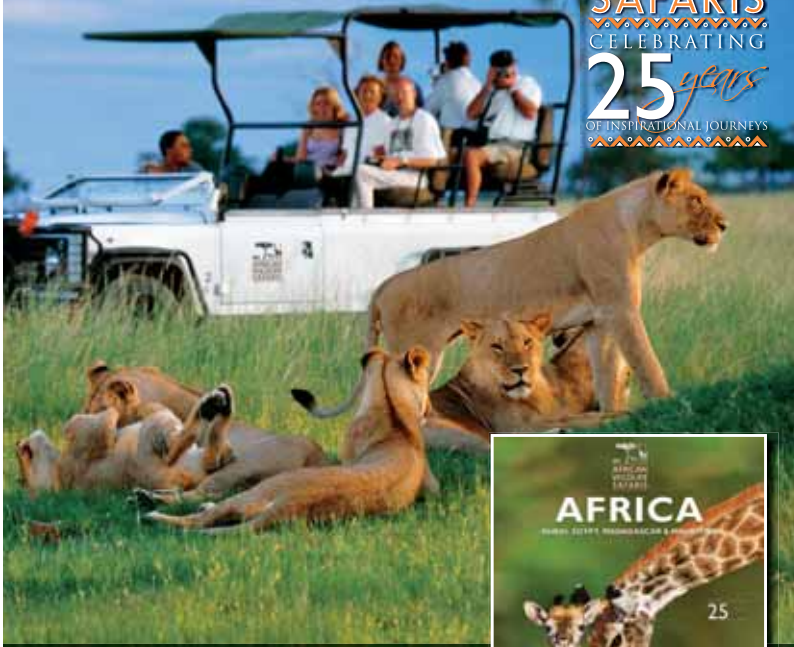
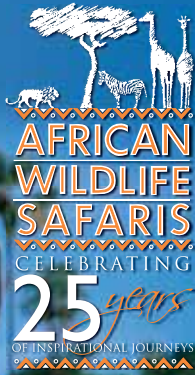
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## Masai village stays, volunteer options added to ATS brochure

AFRICAN Travel Specialists' new brochure, out at the beginning of 2011, will feature some new innovative safaris including Masai village stays and visits, and a choice of volunteer trips to help the children of Kibera – the largest slum in East Africa.

"We will also be offering some packages to some new national parks and lodges that have now opened in Mozambique and Tanzania which offer a great alternative for those wanting to experience pristine wilderness," said ATS' Richard Ruskin.

"For those who love fishing, we have some fishing packages to some extraordinary places in Uganda and the Seychelles. Due to the increasing demand for beach stays, we have expanded our choice of stunning properties in Zanzibar, Lamu Island

and the Mozambique Coast – a great way to finish a safari."

Meanwhile the company has a number of specials on offer.

These include an eight-night Botswana Lodge Safari for \$6500 plus \$420 ticket taxes per person, a saving of \$1000. The price includes airfares from the east coast of Australia, accommodation, all meals (except a dinner), game park fees, internal airfares and game drives.

A six-night stay in a four-star Kenya Lodge Safari now costs from \$2250 per person including accommodation, all meals, transport, game park fees and services of a driver/guide.

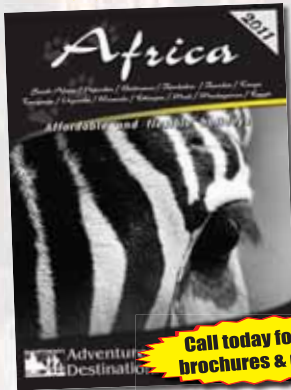
Also on offer is a seven-night "Ultimate Fly Fishing Package" on a private island in the Seychelles. It costs from \$9600 per person.

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## Beachcomber offers extensive 'bush and beach' product combinations

BEACHCOMBER'S new 64-page brochure features a selection of the finest resorts in Mauritius as well as combinations to Africa, Seychelles and Reunion Island.

Highlights of the brochure include dedicated pages for honeymoons and weddings featuring special discounts of up to 50 per cent for the bride, special gifts and some exclusive wedding packages. Beachcomber is offering free weddings at selected hotels in 2011 plus wedding party and anniversary specials.

To showcase family holidays in Mauritius, two pages have been dedicated for this market with Beachcomber offering special deals for kids up to 17 years as well as a free kids club for children aged three to 12 years.

A special "kids stay and eat for free" offer is also included during selected periods.

Exclusive bonus deals are provided for clients who upgrade their accommodation at Beachcomber Hotels and these are indicated on the hotel pages within the brochure.

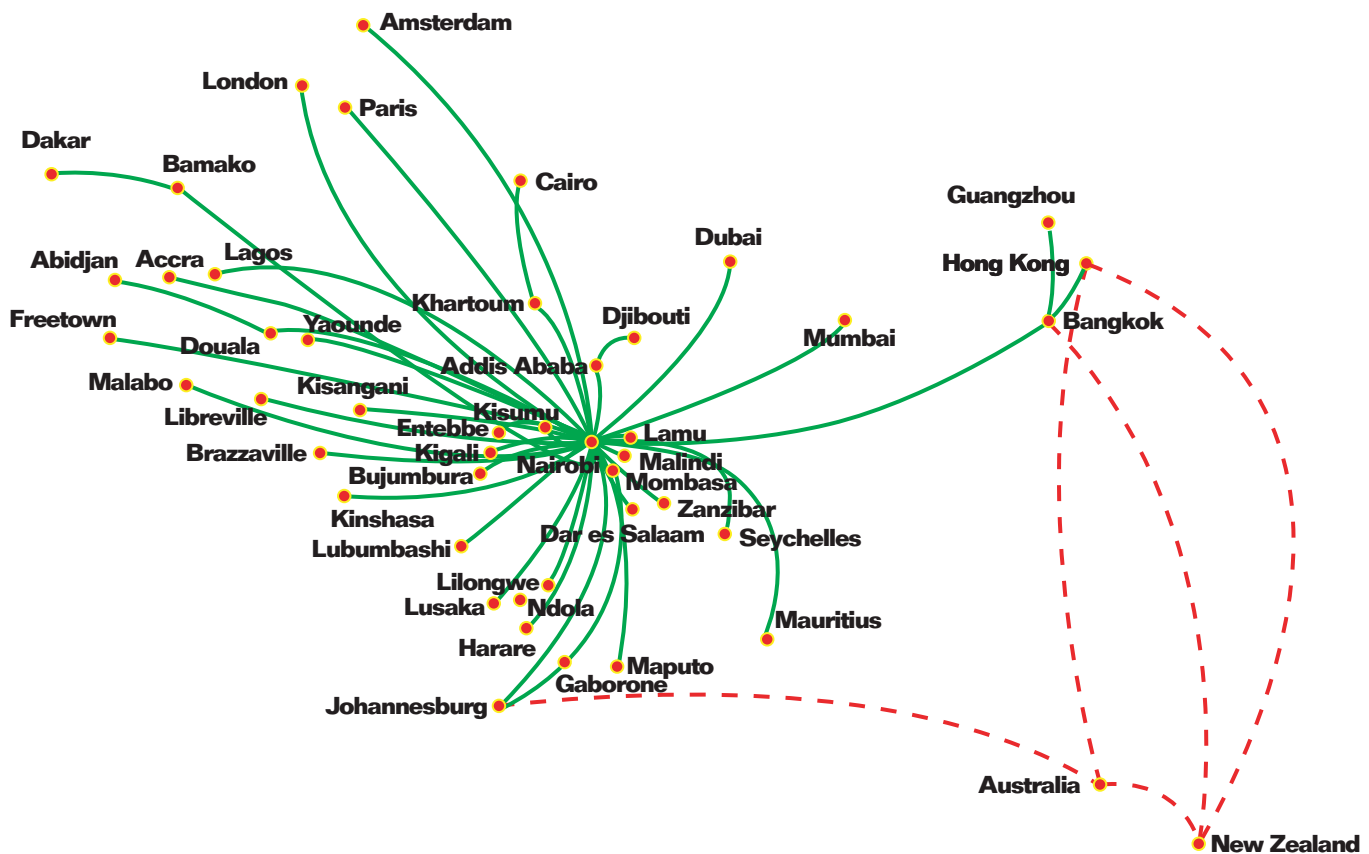
New in 2011 is the five-star Trou aux Biches Resort and Spa which opens on November 5, 2010. It features luxury beachfront pool suites, pool villas, six restaurants, a Clarins Spa and more.

A variety of "Bush and Beach" style itineraries combining Africa with Mauritius as well as island combinations between Mauritius, Seychelles and Reunion are suggested in the brochure.

A selection of online brochures including Africa, Seychelles, Reunion, Bush and Beach, Honeymoons and Weddings plus Golf Holidays are also now available.



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## NHH focuses on self-drive itineraries

NEW Horizons Holidays' (NHH) new Southern Africa brochure includes a number of self-drive itineraries.



Escorted touring options, train travel and sightseeing in all major South African cities and areas are also included.

A range of accommodation from basic budget rest camps in the Kruger to three to five-star camping as

well as three to five-star properties across the whole of South Africa and into Victoria Falls and Zimbabwe, Zambia, and a few options in Botswana are also included.

"Our main focus is on simple, self-drive itineraries and we have a selection of suggested destinations and have packaged these up, along with car options," explained NHH's Gary Hilt. "We partner with Thompsons in South Africa so we can offer a wide range of options and our brochure is merely a snap shot of some of these."

# SAT campaign to build on Cup success

SOUTH African Tourism is set to build on the success of the FIFA World Cup.

"The World Cup not only unified South Africa, it has created significant benefits for the nation and the country's tourism industry," said outgoing general manager Australasia, Bangu Masisi.

"The investment in the World Cup has led the way for major programs and infrastructure to support and grow local communities, generating a legacy that will remain.

"A remarkably successful event for South Africa, the World Cup allowed for the creation of (about) 3.6 million additional jobs for local economies over the tournament period, alongside a boost in tourism infrastructure which has resulted in improved experiences for visitors.

"Opportunities for business, especially among emerging entrepreneurs in South Africa's tourism industry have increased, along with the ability to grow South Africa as a leisure destination year-round."

Masisi said South Africans had significantly benefited from these developments, receiving increased

training and up-skilling in hospitality and tourism sectors to cope with the influx of World Cup arrivals.

"The projected overall economic impact of the World Cup is 93 billion rand (about \$A13.83b) with 62 per cent of this amount accounted for by spending on infrastructure and preparations."

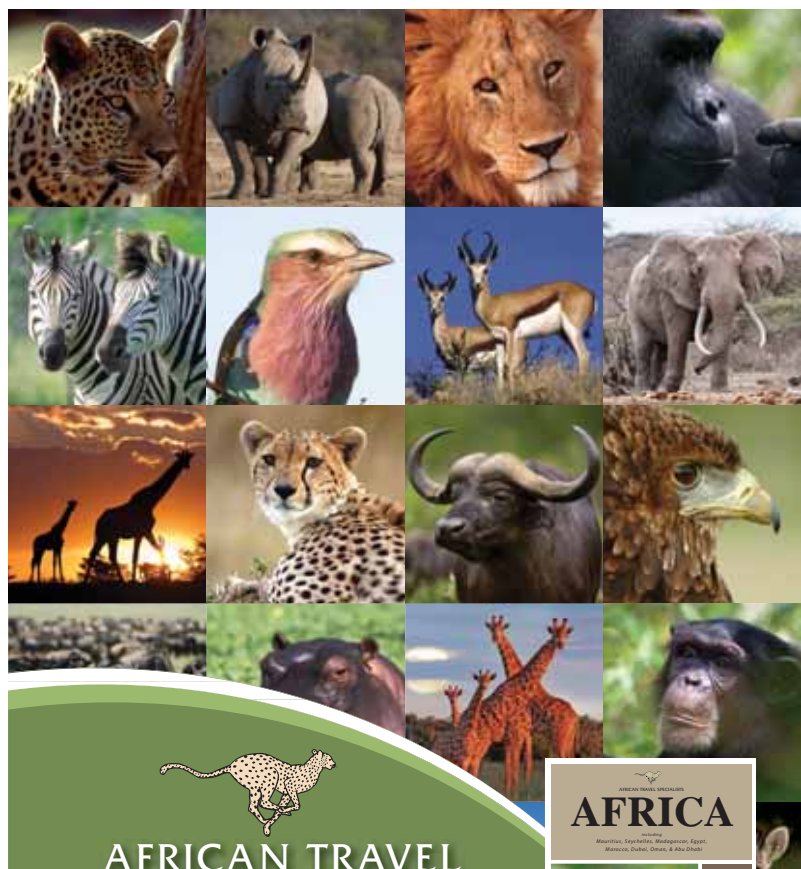
Now the World Cup is over, 'South

strategies to not only promote the unique destination that is South Africa to trade and consumers, but to also engage consumers and generate word of mouth and true adventure accounts of our wide range of unique South African experiences," Masisi said.

She said that while it was disappointing V Australia had decided to pull out from the South Africa



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African Adventure' 2010/11 campaign will continue to ensure South Africa remains top of mind with Australian travellers.

"The campaign is well under way and includes a variety of media, promotions, public relations and online

service, SAT was confident current airline partners would continue to provide accessibility to Australian travellers wishing to visit South Africa.

"We are working closely with our partners to ensure the success of this service well into the future," she said.

## Kenya Airways introduces new services, upgraded aircraft

KENYA Airways is adding new services and aircraft to its Asian routes. The airline is now operating its new B777 aircraft on its daily flights from Bangkok to Nairobi (which has direct connections from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide) and three flights per week from Hong Kong to Nairobi (with connections from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Cairns). The aircraft will operate on the routes until December 21.

From November 1 to December 13 the airline will operate three additional flights a week between Bangkok and Nairobi. These flights will depart on a Monday, Wednesday and Saturday on a B767.

Kenya Airways pricing and distribution manager Tonia Garabedian said the B777 had been fitted with upgraded in-flight entertainment system and 28 award-winning flat beds in business class.

"We offer competitive and flexible

fares from Australia via Bangkok to Nairobi and beyond with partners Qantas and Thai International and via Hong Kong to Nairobi with Cathay Pacific and Qantas," she said.

"The fares offer a variety of routings including travel ex Australia to Africa via Johannesburg in one direction and Nairobi and Bangkok or Hong Kong in the other."

Garabedian said with the strength of the Australian dollar there was increased interest from Australians wanting to experience the magic of Kenya and Africa, in particular the extraordinary annual migration of wildebeest, zebra and gazelle across the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem.

Kenya Airways serves more than three million passengers a year and flies to over 50 destinations worldwide, including direct flights from Nairobi to Bangkok, London, Amsterdam and Paris. The airline recently launched the new destinations of Luanda in Angola and Juba in Sudan.

# AWS introduces new lodges, camps

AFRICAN Wildlife Safari's (AWS) new 2011 Africa brochure features a number of new additions including a range of luxury lodges and camps in prime game viewing areas. The brochure has increased in size from 100 to 116 pages.

As a result of the World Cup the South Africa section of the brochure has been increased significantly.

"South Africa received a lot of good publicity over the World Cup period, which has seen an increase in travel to this area," said AWS marketing manager, Praful Albuquerque.

"Customers are now more clued up to what is available and view South Africa as a safe and secure destination. We have seen an increase in requests for self-drive tours in areas such as the picturesque Garden Route in the Western Cape. As a result we have included hire car company Europcar and a new self-drive itinerary that features the Karoo and Garden route."

AWS has also added new luxury lodges in the Western and Eastern Capes of South Africa, as well as increasing the range of game viewing lodges and camps in the private reserves



Interactive vet safaris give clients a unique hands-on adventure

that surround Kruger National Park.

"The expansion of the brochure has also meant we have been able to include some special interest features to cater for repeat travellers to Africa or those looking for something a bit different," Albuquerque said.

"We have included interactive vet safaris that depart from Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth which gives clients a unique hands-on adventure,

travelling with an experienced wildlife veterinarian as they perform health checks, collaring and microchipping on a range of animals."

Product offerings in Zambia and Zimbabwe have also increased and include new itineraries and camps.

"Zambia has long been sold as the 'real Africa' as it has miles of unspoilt wilderness, fewer tourists and some excellent small camps."

## Bench adds new Botswana products

BENCH International has enhanced its Africa program with the addition of new products in Botswana – one a mid-range private game lodge and the other a canoeing adventure in the Selinda Reserve.

The three-day stay at Xakanaxa Camp in the heart of the Moremi Game Reserve is one of few properties which can offer a year-round Okavango Delta land and water safari experience. The package costs from \$1460 per person.

Bench's Fiona Orton said the product offered the highest quality all-inclusive experience but was costed in the middle-price range for the 2011 brochure.

The canoe adventure is a five-day package paddling through 45km of the Selinda Spillway for a rare close-up wildlife experience. The deal costs \$2475 per person and includes camping, walking, all meals and house beers and wines, plus return flights from Maun.



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# *Mauritius:* IT'S FRENCH FOR HEAVEN



# MAURITIUS AT A GLANCE

- Mauritius** Mauritius was named after the Dutch Prince Maurice Van Nassau
- Capital** Port Louis
- Location** Latitude 20° south of the equator, Longitude 57.5° east
- Area** 2040 km sq
- Population** 1.2 million including Rodrigues and outer islands
- Time** +4 hours Greenwich Mean Time

## Geography

The white beaches are protected by coral reef all around the island except for the southern coast that offers breath taking dramatic cliffs. From the northern plains, the land rises to a central plateau dotted by lakes and extinct volcanic craters. Discover some of the uninhabited islets which are scattered around the main island.

| Season:      | Summer           | Winter        |
|--------------|------------------|---------------|
| Month:       | November - April | May - October |
| Temperature: | 23°C to 33°C     | 17°C to 23°C  |

**Sea Temperature** 22°C to 27°C

## Languages

English is the official language. French and Creole are commonly used. Hindi and Bhojpuri are also spoken.

## Government

Democratic state based on the Westminster model. There are 62 Members of Parliament elected every five years. The President is the head of the state but constitutional power is vested in the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.

## Economy

The Mauritian Economy rests on four main pillars: Tourism, Sugar, Textile and the Services Sector.

## Religion

In the multi-ethnic culture of Mauritius, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism co-exist peacefully.

