



CAPE TOWN TO MAHE LUXURY CRUISE

Sail from Cape Town to Mahe with relaxing days at sea and stops in idyllic places along the way. Start with an overnight in Cape Town which is arguably one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Explore Durban and Richards Bay before a bonus trip to Madagascar's Tolagnaro to savour long sandy beaches and lush greenery. Experience the beauty of Reunion and neighbouring island Mauritius, before discovering Antsiranana and Praslin before arrival in Mahe.



ITINERARY

Day 1 - Cape Town, South Africa

Sprawling across endless, staggeringly blue coastline, and watched over by the iconic plane of Table Mountain, Cape Town is without doubt one of the world's most beautiful cities. A blend of spectacular mountain scenery, multiculturalism and relaxed



ocean charm awaits in the Mother City, where you can venture out to rolling vineyards, dine in laid back sea suburbs, or spend days exploring cool urban culture. Cape Town's natural splendour fully reveals itself as the cable car rears sharply to the top of Table Mountain. From the summit, 3,500 feet above sea level, you can let the scale of the panoramic vistas of the city rolling down towards the ocean wash over you. Another heavenly perspective waits at the top of Lion's Head's tapering peak. A sharp hike and an early start is required, but the views of the morning sun painting Table Mountain honey-gold are some of Cape Town's finest. Cape Town's glorious sunshine and inviting blue rollers can be a little deceiving - these oceans are anything but warm at times, with nothing between the peninsula's end and Antarctica's icy chill. This cool water has upsides though, bringing a colony of adorably cute African penguins to Boulders Beach. Boarded walkways offer the perfect vantage point to see the cute creatures dipping into the sea and lounging in the sun. Nearby, journey to the end of Africa at the Cape of Good Hope, where you can stand at the bottom of this mighty continent, watching out over the merging waves of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Cape Town's beauty is counterpointed by the ominous island form, which sits four miles offshore from the bustling restaurants and lazy seals of the lively V&A; Waterfront. A living history lesson, you can sail in the ships that transported prisoners out to Robben Island, before a former prisoner tells of the traumas of life on this offshore prison. Your guide will show you the cramped cells, and render Mandela's long walk to freedom in heartbreaking, visceral clarity.

Day 2 - Day at sea

Days at sea are the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind and catch up with what you've been meaning to do. So whether that is going to the gym, visiting the spa, whale watching, catching up on your reading or simply topping up your tan, these blue sea days are the perfect balance to busy days spent exploring shore side.

Day 3 - Port Elizabeth, South Africa

Port Elizabeth, or PE is an uncut gem of a destination. Loved by wealthy South African families as a holiday destination, it is a city has of faces. One: a natural haven with unspoiled beaches, rolling sand dunes and the warm Indian Ocean lapping at your feet and two: a post-industrial migrant city with a rich heritage. PE is also called Nelson Mandela Bay, and there is much here that celebrates him - starting with Route 67, a collection of 67 artworks honouring the 67 years that Mandela dedicated to achieving South Africa's freedom. Known as "the friendly city", Port Elizabeth is enjoying an urban regeneration, spurred on by the youth of the region that want to put it (back) on the map. Think vibrant creative projects spilling out wherever you go; a pedestrianised central zone, galleries selling local artworks, restaurants serving South African fusion food, award-winning buildings that house museums, restored Victorian terraces. Unsurprisingly, the boardwalk is buzzing. PE's proximity to the excellent nature parks at Addo and Lalibela make it an ideal destination for game lovers. Both of these parks are a little way from PE (70 and 90 kilometres east respectively) but both offer a chance to revel in South Africa's no holds barred natural beauty. This is the real reason why people come to South Africa



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- for a chance to see the fabled Big Five. Addo even boasts the Big Seven (lion, elephant, rhino, buffalo and leopard, as well as the great white shark and Southern right whale).

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Day 5 - Richards Bay, South Africa

Considered as the official gateway to Zululand, Richard's Bay has morphed from being a tiny fishing village into a bustling harbour town. Today, the 30 km² lagoon is the major port of the region (and also the deepest in Africa), a growth spurred on by the significant mineral deposits, wonderful wetland scenery, unspoilt beaches and game reserves. Located on the north coast of KwaZulu-Natal, Richards Bay was founded in 1879. British Rear Admiral Sir Frederick William Richards eponymously named the port after landing there during the Anglo-Zulu colonial wars. Despite its superlative natural setting, Richards Bay was long considered a southern African backwater, with as little as 200 residents as recently as 1969. This number grew when it was proclaimed a town, but even today it is relatively underpopulated, with fewer than 60,000 calling the province home. The town's Zulu heritage is omnipresent so be sure to

look out the local arts and crafts. Nearby Zulu village Dumazulu is the only Zulu village to be opened up to tourism by King Goodwill Zwelithini, and the only authentic example of Zulu traditions that foreigners are allowed to into. If African culture is not your cup of tea, the hinterland offers fascinating flora and fauna, including a chance to see the incredibly rare white rhino along with the bucket list Big Five. Richards Bay's attractions can be found closer to port too - the 350 kilometres of coastland, also known as "Dolphin coast", are a joy for divers and beach lovers alike.

Day 6 - Day at sea

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Day 7 - Bazaruto Island, Mozambique

Bazaruto Island lies within the eponymously named archipelago, which forms a chain of barrier islands a short distance off the coast of Mozambique. The archipelago became a National Park in 1971 in recognition of its precious and varied flora and fauna, including iconic animals such as sea turtles and dugongs.



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At least 170 bird species have been recorded across the 6 islands and nearby waters, along with 48 species of reptiles, 21 land mammals, 9 marine mammals, 500 species of mollusc and 2000 species of fish. Sighting even a small fraction of this diverse assemblage of wildlife will make the journey to Bazaruto Island worthwhile.

The protected western coastline exudes the air of tropical tranquillity, with palm trees casting shade on white sand beaches that are lapped by clear warm waters. If not swimming then delve deeper into the interior to see if, with your ship's ornithologist you can differentiate between Blue-cheeked and Madagascar Bee-eater as they intently scan for flying insects from their prominent perches. More identifiable perhaps are the Common Waxbills, zebra-like with a striking scarlet mask, and occurring in boisterous flocks in grassy and reedy areas.

Don't think for a minute that the hunt for exotic wildlife is easy - it can remain hidden despite ear-shattering shrieks that belie its obviousness - but for those who are patient and persevere, the bragging rights at dinner are endless, if you have seen for example, the golden blind legless skink, a sub-species endemic to the island.

Day 8 - Day at sea

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Day 9 - Island of Mozambique, Mozambique

The densely populated Mozambique Island is small at only 3 km (1.9 miles) long and less than 500 meters (650 yards) wide. The Portuguese had already settled here by 1507, and the oldest European building in the southern hemisphere is found on Mozambique Island: the Chapel of Nossa Senhora de Baluarte. Fort Sao Sebastiao also dates back to the 16th century. Historical buildings on the northern side of the island include the Palace and Chapel of Sao Paulo, built in 1610 as a Jesuit College -- later converted to be the Governor's Residence, and now a museum. As a result of its rich history and architectural remains, the Island of Mozambique is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The majority of the residents today live in reed houses in Makuti Town at the southern end of the island. In addition to the old Christian churches there are several mosques and even a Hindu temple on the island. For the last 55 years a 3 km (1.9 mile) bridge has connected the island to the mainland.

Day 10 - Day at sea

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Day 11 - Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania

Kilwa Kisiwani dates back to the 9th century as one of the most famous trading posts in East Africa and on the Indian Ocean. From the 11th century to early 15th century this island community off the southern coast of present-day Tanzania was a powerful city, political force, and major trading center with close links to the interior of Africa as well as distant Asian ports. Goods exchanged here included gold, iron, ivory, slaves, textiles, jewelry, porcelain and spices. Today, Kilwa Kisiwani is a UNESCO World Heritage site whose ancient ruins can be explored on foot. From the Malindi Mosque and cemetery, to Fort Gereza, the tombs of the sultans, several mosques, and the Great House, the site allows the imagination to experience the Kilwa Sultanate that once ruled here. Highlights include a fourteenth century palace -- no structure of its size was built anywhere else along the coast - and a fortified enclosure, very similar to structures found in Syria, Turkey and the Persian Gulf.

Day 12 - Sinda Island, Tanzania

Day 13 - Misali Island, Tanzania

Day 14 - Zanzibar, Tanzania

A tropical paradise, with swathes of long white sand and flanked by tall, skinny, palm trees, Zanzibar sits in the clear blue waters of the Indian Ocean. Part of the Zanzibar archipelago, the island - also confusingly called Zanzibar - is found just 22 miles from mainland Tanzania. Considered today as a honeymooners' paradise, visitors will find vestiges of both Arabic and Portuguese colonialism (the island was Portuguese until 1698 when it was seized by the Sultanate of Oman), amid the picture perfect landscape. But there is much more to Zanzibar than meets the eye. With just one step off the ship, and you are already breathing the heady scents of nutmeg, cinnamon, vanilla and cloves. Rightfully known as the Spice Isle, Zanzibar was once a trading hotspot on the trading route from Arabia to Africa. At the time, the island enjoyed an influx of wealth and European bourgeoisie, with spices being traded at astronomical prices. The influences of the various colonies are glamorously reflected in the main city's architecture. But sensual smells and beautiful beaches aside, Zanzibar has the vestiges of sinister history. The island was a capital for the slave trade in the 19th century, with an estimated 50,000 slaves passing through the Zanzibar slave market each year, with many more dying en route. The epicentre for trade was in the Market Square, in the heart of Stone Town, a melting pot of Arabic, African and European history that today is one of the world's most popular UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Day 15 - Day at Sea

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Day 16 - Assumption & Aldabra Seychelles

Assumption (Assomption) Island is a small, crescent shaped island about 4.3 square miles (11.07 sq km) in size. Considered one of the Outer Seychelles Islands, Assumption is part of the Aldabra Group, lying approximately 600 miles (960 km) southwest of Mahe, in the Indian Ocean. These outer islands are not made from granite, like their larger sisters Mahe, Praslin or La Digue, but rather are coralline formations. Once a part of the French colony Reunion, then a member of the British Indian Ocean Territories, today Assumption is governed by the Seychelles. Assumption is a rough and arid island, shaded only by shrubs and palm trees but is redeemed by a spectacular reef with huge coral heads and a white ocean floor. Jacques Cousteau said he'd never seen any other place on earth with same clarity of water or diversity of reef life. He filmed large parts of documentary "The Silent World" here, and held audiences across the globe, spellbound by the magic that lay beneath the sea. A notable feature of this island is the Assumption Island day gecko, a subspecies of gecko found only on this island. Assumption is also a known nesting site for turtles and rare birds. Because Assumption Island was found to be rich in guano, coveted for its phosphorous fertilizing abilities, it was essentially plundered in the early 1900s. The island today has an interesting geography that includes a gorgeous 3-mile (5-km) white beach, a rocky coastline, caves, and two very large

sand dunes prominent on the south eastern coast of the island, one of them reaching 104 feet (32 metres) high. There is a very small settlement with less than 10 registered inhabitants, mostly in place to service the small landing strip used by scientists with permission to study the neighbouring Aldabra Atoll. The settlement is surrounded by Casuarina trees and there is an abandoned coconut palm plantation to its south. Pier Information The ship will be anchored off the coast of Assumption and tenders will land on the shoreline. We recommend you wear sturdy walking shoes, sun hats or scarves and bring your camera. Independently explore the island and relax on this peaceful dot in the ocean.

Days 17-18 - Aldabra, Seychelles

Part of the Outer Islands of the Seychelles, Aldabra is reputedly the world's second-largest atoll and has been described as "one of nature's treasures" and a "sanctuary". The inner lagoon teems with marine life like eagle rays and sea turtles. It is possible to snorkel and drift along with the tide passing in or out of the lagoon as massive numbers of fish come and go through the same channels. Narrow channels between fossilized coral islands are fringed in mangrove forests supporting large colonies of nesting boobies and Great Frigatebirds. Its distinctive island fauna includes the Aldabra giant tortoise (*Aldabrachelys gigantea*). Approximately two-thirds of the world's population of giant tortoises lives on Aldabra - some 100,000 out of a reported 150,000. Because of its extreme isolation in the blue of the Indian Ocean, and due to a lack of freshwater, the island has not been developed for tourism. No airport has been built, and only a handful of smaller ships with special permits are allowed to call at this unique atoll.



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Day 19 - Day at Sea

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Day 20 - La Digue, Seychelles

Urbanites look away. You'll find no bright lights or big cities here. The attraction of La Digue is that there are no none. Instead it's just long ribbons of perfect beach, lush inland forests and enough kaleidoscopic coral reef to make any diver weak at the knees. Because of La Digue's proximity to both Praslin and Mahe, it is considered part of the holy trinity of the Seychelles. But that is not to say that it's a hot spot. On the contrary, life is taken at a slow pace here - transport is by bicycle or ox-cart (there are rumours that motor taxis exist but for now that's just hearsay), entertainment is a slow walk on paths shaded by tropical flowers, and life hums to the rhythm of bygone days. That is the true attraction of La Digue, the very other wordiness of the island; the feeling that nothing has changed since the 18th century. In fact, some of the residents (called Digueois) still carry the names of their forefathers, who arrived as slaves with the French colonialists in 1789. The island's beaches are, of course, legendary. The jewel in La Digue's crown (and there are so many) would have to be La Anse Source d'Argent, frequently considered as one of the most beautiful beaches on the planet. This is truly the Holy Grail - a long string of powdery,

white sand, bordered by the crystal clear waters of the Indian Ocean. Scattered around the beach and shore are smooth granite boulders that form coves and caves and provide home for some of the most colourful underwater life you're ever likely to see.

Day 21 - Mahe, Seychelles

Few places on Earth can claim to have been as blessed by nature as Mahe. Set in the remote Seychelles archipelago over 1,500 kilometres east of Mombasa, Mahe is largest of the 115 islands and is home to so many stunning attractions you won't know where to begin. For many the Seychelles are the destination of a lifetime. Cerulean seas, miles and miles of beach, lush, tropical jungle and surreal, natural beauty as far as the eye can see. Not only does Mahe boast 68 pristine beaches, it is dominated by the towering peaks of the Morne Seychellois National Park. This splendid National Park takes up over 20% of the island and is home to a vast amount of endemic flora and fauna, including the ultra-rare Seychelles Scops-owl. Unsurprisingly, the crystal clear waters are a diver's heaven, promising a colourful cornucopia of underwater life, regardless of how experienced you are. Despite the island being visited in 1609 by the British, Mahe did not feature on any maps until 1742, when Frenchman Lazare Picault explored the as yet unnamed islands. However, it took a further 14 years for the French to lay claim to the islands, with the arrival of naval ship Le Cerf, captained by Corneille Morphey who christened the archipelago after Vicomte Moreau de Sechelles. He did this by setting down a Stone of Possession, which is on display in the National Museum. The first settlers arrived in 1770 and 15

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years later the population had swelled to 130 - 7 Europeans
and 123 slaves. Today, there are 80,000 Seychellois.



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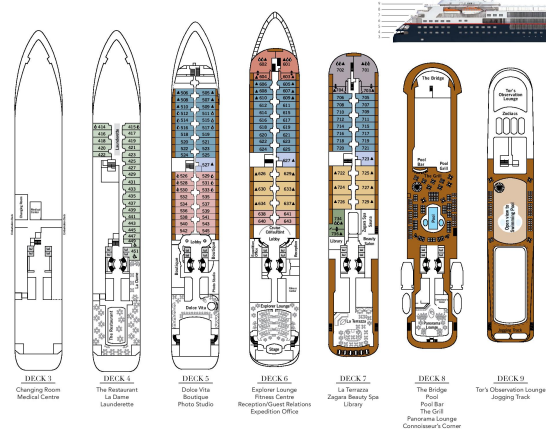
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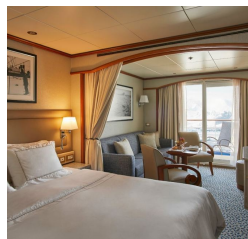
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- Deluxe Veranda Suite
- Veranda Suite
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- Officers
- Tonnage
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- Speed
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