

# The Seychelles Dive Safari

**Diving the depths of the world's most ancient islands**



Experience an amazing week of diving in the paradise islands of the Seychelles, cruising conveniently from one island to the next aboard a charming century-old schooner, seeking out the archipelago's most prolific underwater sites.



# The Seychelles Dive Safari

**D**ive amidst ancient granite pillars and shoals of tropical fish on a live-aboard trip with one of two traditional Dutch schooners, the SV Sea Shell or SV Sea Pearl, as they make their way across a dozen of Seychelles' islands and islets.

This 7-night cruise combines the underwater world of the world's only granitic mid-ocean islands with a PADI dive instructor as your guide, together with the rustic charms of a historic early 1900s vessel that doubles as a full-service floating hotel.





# The Seychelles Dive Safari

## The Diving Experience

### What makes this trip different?

Although we do offer diving on all our year-round cruise departures, the Seychelles Dive Safari provides a more concentrated dive experience for those seeking to maximize their time spent underwater, as well as to discover the widest possible variety of different dive sites during a Seychelles holiday. The key factors which make this cruise ideal for divers include:

#### Best Possible Conditions

We've carefully selected the dates for our diving safaris to coincide with the calmest periods the islands have to offer. There may be no guarantees with weather, but with these dates falling in between the opposing trade-wind seasons, it's the best bet for flat-calm seas and amazing visibility.

#### Open-Sea Diving

Another benefit of the dates we've selected: calm conditions allow us to venture to out-of-the-way, open-sea dive sites that may not offer good enough shelter for diving at other times of the year. These sites typically offer some of the most dramatic scenery and marine life to be found on Seychelles' inner-island plateau, including large pelagic.

#### Dedicated Diving Tender

An 11-metre diving tender, with capacity for 12 divers, accompanies the 'mother vessel' throughout the safari, to greatly increase comfort for divers in getting between dive sites and the vessel.

#### Companions Welcome

While diving is the primary focus of this cruise, the Seychelles archipelago is as diverse as it is beautiful, allowing us to accommodate non-diving companions with no shortage of activities parallel to the diving excursions. Visits to nature reserves and island sanctuaries, as well as snorkeling and kayaking, are available throughout the cruise, meaning partners unable to dive can enjoy the experience fully, with or without a good book.





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## The Diving Experience



### Diving in Seychelles

The Seychelles inner island archipelago rests on a plateau that broke off from the super-continent Gondwanaland millions of years ago - the remnants of a submerged granite mountain range. This unique geological phenomenon has resulted in stunning flora and fauna both above and beneath the surface.

Most of the dive sites we'll visit feature large granite rock formations that create different passages and caves. These are home to a rich population of tropical fish, large numbers of pelagic species such as sharks, barracudas, jacks and tunas as well as rays and turtles.

Most dives in the inner islands are between the depths of 8-20 meters, although some of the sites on our diving safari tend to be a little deeper.

The best diving periods are the months of March, April & May, as well as October, November & early December. During this time the sea is typically calm, offering visibility of up to 30 meters, while at the same time allowing us to visit open-sea dive sites that may not be accessible in other times of the year.

Water temperatures can reach up to 30 degrees Celsius at its warmest, which is what divers can expect during our safari.

### Diving on our vessels

A PADI dive instructor is based on board at all times. With the assistance of the crew he takes care of all the divers' needs above and below the water. Safety and emergency equipment is located onboard according to the PADI dive resorts requirements.

Divers will find onboard facilities for storing their equipment, as well as areas for preparing their equipment/cameras and other sensitive gear. Facilities for rinsing the equipment with fresh water and protecting it from the sun are also available.

Electricity connections (European two-prong, round pin) are available in the salon and in the cabins, allowing for divers to charge cameras and upload photos to their laptops anytime of day while onboard.



# The Seychelles Dive Safari

## Itinerary ~ Days 1-4

Guests onboard will have the opportunity to do 3 dives every day, on the sites, selected according to the weather conditions, except of the day of the crossing to/from Praslin (on the first and the last day of the cruise), when we will do one dive.

### Day 1 - Saturday

#### *Diving & Crossing*

Embarkation at the Inter-Island Quay at 1030hrs, followed by the Captain's welcome briefing. Depart Port Victoria at 1200hrs, sailing from Mahé to a late afternoon anchorage at Round Island, just off the isle of Praslin. In the evening, introduce yourself to Creole cuisine with a welcome barbecue dinner onboard.



### Day 2 - Sunday

#### *Diving & Visit to Vallee de Mai, Praslin*

Sail to Praslin, Seychelles' second-largest inhabited island, for disembarkation to the famous World Heritage Site, the Vallee de Mai Nature Reserve. This ancient forest is home to the curiously shaped double coconut, the coco de mer, as well as the Black Parrot, unique to Praslin. Explore the valley's eerie pathways beneath its canopy of massive palms, before returning onboard for afternoon opportunities to dive, snorkel or enjoy other water sports.

### Day 3 - Monday

#### *Diving & Visit to La Digue*

Sail to La Digue, a sleepy island community where ox-carts and bicycles still remain the most common mode of transportation throughout the island. La Digue is home to the endemic Seychelles Paradise Flycatcher, and is perhaps most famous for its massive granite boulder formations at Anse Source d'Argent, which is thought to be the most photographed beach on earth. Explore the island, perhaps stopping by Union Estate, a sprawling network of traditional island activities, including a copra mill, vanilla plantation, and shipyard.



\*For the well-being and overall enjoyment of guests, adjustments to the itinerary and/or the dive sites visited may be necessary, in the event of certain weather conditions or other factors. Any such changes are at the discretion of the captain.



### Day 4 - Tuesday

#### *Diving & Island visit (visit to Sisters is for non-divers)*

The vessel sails toward Grande Soeur and Petite Soeur (the Sisters). The waters surrounding these two uninhabited private islands provide excellent diving, meanwhile non-diver guests will have the opportunity to visit the island. In the afternoon, visit Coco Island, one of Seychelles' tiny granite jewels, a fantastic spot for snorkeling within a kaleidoscope of tropical fish.



# The Seychelles Dive Safari

## Itinerary - Days 5-8

### Day 5 - Wednesday

#### Diving & Visit to Aride

Sail to Booby Island for a morning of diving and water sports. After lunch, sail to Aride Island, a globally important nature reserve with more native bird species than any other island, including five endemics and the world's largest population of 3 species (Lesser Noddy, Audubon's Shearwater and Seychelles Warbler). The nature trail leads to a spectacular cliff-top view with the largest frigatebird roost outside of Aldabra. Aride is the only natural location in the world for Wright's Gardenia and 400 species of fish have been recorded around the island.



### Day 6 - Thursday

#### Diving & Visit to Curieuse, St. Pierre

Disembark at Curieuse for a visit of this virtually uninhabited island. Experience the island's vast mangrove forests and its giant tortoise farm, along with the historic ruins of this former leper colony. After a barbecue lunch on the island, enjoy an array of water sports or simply relax and enjoy the island's beautiful beach and turquoise waters.

### Day 7 - Friday

#### Diving & Crossing

After breakfast, enjoy a leisurely sail back towards Mahé, with a last stop at Ile Seche for more diving/ or snorkeling, followed by a farewell barbecue. The vessel then sails into Port Victoria for an overnight stay.



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### Day 8 - Saturday

Disembarkation at 08.30am at Inter Island Quay, Mahé.



# Life Onboard

While our instructor aims to provide an unforgettable diving experience, the rest of our crew is dedicated to ensuring the stay onboard is just as memorable.

Whether it's morning coffee served out on deck, or the lighting of the BBQ at sunset before a sumptuous dinner, it's the little moments shared between our crew and passengers, combined with the unique charm and soul of these historic schooners, that transform an otherwise fun holiday into more of an authentic and enriching experience.







## Life Onboard

SV Sea Shell & Sea Pearl are 36-metre schooners, providing overnight accommodation across 8 air-conditioned cabins, with a service concept that is more akin to a floating hotel.

### Cabin Categories

Various configurations are available on each vessel, from single bunk cabins, to double-bed cabins with an extra bunk. Each cabin has its own wash basin, while separate toilet and shower facilities, compartmentalized for privacy, are shared by the guests on the vessel.

### Crew

With a guest-to-crew ratio of 2-to-1 at maximum occupancy, we offer a unique brand of authentic Seychellois hospitality at sea. In addition to the dive instructor our crew consists of the captain, engineer, 2 deckhands, 2 stewardesses and a dedicated chef.

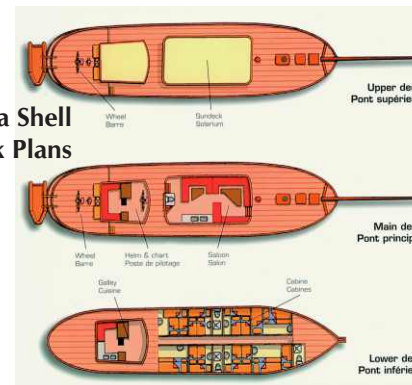
### Excursions & Other Activities

The itinerary will allow for several land visits to islands and nature sanctuaries, in addition to marine national parks. The landing fees for these excursions are included under our conservation fees in the total price package.

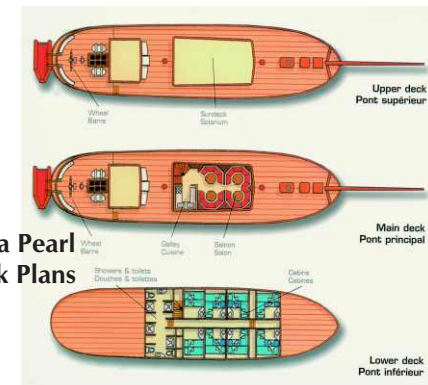
### Facilities & Amenities

- TV, DVD, Stereo in Main Salon
- Laundry on request (extra charge)

#### Sea Shell Deck Plans



#### Sea Pearl Deck Plans







## Things to Know & Travel Tips

- ✿ Your safety, comfort and enjoyment are our highest priorities. In the event of unusual weather conditions or for the best interests of the overall experience, the itinerary is subject to change at the captain's discretion.
- ✿ Be sure to bring plenty of sun-screen, a cap or hat and sunglasses - Seychelles is generally warm and sunny throughout the year and the sun's rays can be especially impactful onboard the vessel, due to the reflection from the sea.
- ✿ Bring suitable footwear for walking on deck and on the beach, as well as in shallow water (some island visits require embarking & disembarking from dinghies in shallow water).
- ✿ Our cruises are full board - we serve a combination of International and authentic Creole cuisine. Please contact us for any special dietary needs.
- ✿ Water and squash/juice is available all day in the salon to keep you hydrated and ready for your next dive.
- ✿ Bottled water, soft drinks, beer, wine and spirits are all available on board. Price list available on request.

*Special thanks to the wonderful photographers who've graced our vessels (and this document) with their considerable talents: Tony Baskeyfield, Martina Bauder, Lionel Baizeau, Remy Ravon, Henri Eskenazi, AMRI Photo*

### *Sea Star & Sea Bird*



For groups and whole boat charters, we can offer our diving safari program aboard our modern yachts SY Sea Star & SY Sea Bird, offering the same diving itinerary but with a different kind of cruising experience. Please contact us for more information.