

MAGNETIC Mauritian MOMENTS

MAURITIUS HAS LONG BEEN FAMOUS FOR ITS SUN,
SEA AND SAND. KATE WEBSTER GIVES YOU A TASTE
OF WHAT TO DO ON THIS ISLAND NATION.



A volcanic island of lagoons and palm-fringed beaches with coral reefs surrounding most of the coastline, Mauritius boasts a colourful culture and unique landscape to explore.

Located off the southeast coast of the African continent in the Indian Ocean, this small island nation has a big heart and plenty to offer every type of traveller. Here are some of the top things to discover in Mauritius.

THE BEACHES

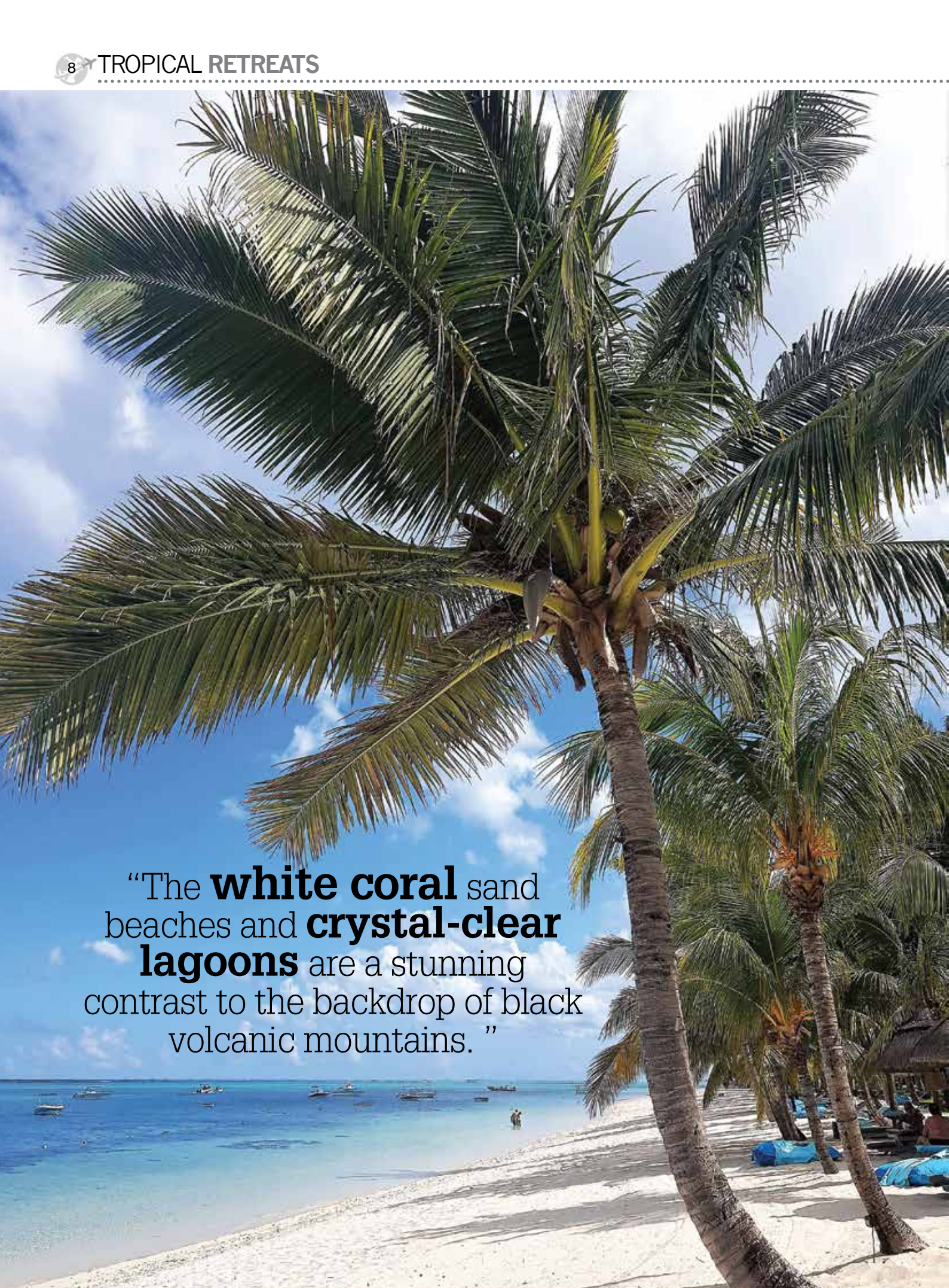
Being an island means Mauritius has some of the most amazing beaches to explore. The white coral sand beaches and crystal-clear lagoons are a stunning contrast to the backdrop of black volcanic mountains. Some of the most notable beaches definitely worth a visit are Pereybere, Flic en Flac, Le Morne, Belle Mare, Blue Bay and Ile aux Cerfs. A day at the beach is also a great opportunity to mingle with Mauritian families who enjoy picnicking on the beach on sunny days.

A good way to discover the differences between the North, East, South and West, is to drive around the coast visiting the different beaches. Each region is unique and has so many treasures waiting to be discovered. The North, with its flat, sandy beaches and stunning weather, is action packed and has plenty of activities on offer. The East boasts large turquoise lagoons and is windier, especially in winter. The South with its wild, steep cliffs is a stunning part of the island that is a must-see. The West and South-West are hot and dry, perfect for surfing and kitesurfing, among other activities.

YEAR ROUND DIVING

With 330 kilometres of coastline encircled by a coral barrier reef that protects the turquoise lagoons of the island, Mauritius offers exclusive diving experiences to its visitors all year round. What is unique to diving in Mauritius is the proximity to shore. Although most of the more challenging dive sites are found outside of the barrier reef, they are still invariably reached with just a 20-minute boat ride.

Located off Flic en Flac on the west coast of the island is the dive site called the Cathedral, one of the most popular dives in Mauritius. Other popular spots include Gunner's Coin where you can see large parrotfish at each dive; Whale Rock (26 to 38m deep) where the lucky ones can

A vibrant tropical beach scene. In the foreground, a large, lush green palm tree with a thick trunk leans towards the right. The ground is a mix of white sand and green grass. In the middle ground, a wide, white sandy beach stretches along the water's edge. The water is a clear, bright turquoise color, with several small boats visible in the distance. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. In the background, more palm trees and a thatched-roof hut are visible on the right side.

“The **white coral** sand beaches and **crystal-clear lagoons** are a stunning contrast to the backdrop of black volcanic mountains. ”

come face to face with a hammerhead shark; and Holt's Rocks (16 to 25m deep) whose name suggests the formation of huge rocks under the sea.

SEGA DANCING

You cannot possibly leave Mauritius without learning to dance a few Sega steps. The Sega is a vibrant, folkloric dance with a distinctive African rhythm. The spirit of Africa resonates through the musical instruments – usually ravanne, maravanne or triangle are played, while the songs, sung in Creole, depict the Mauritian way of life.

Originally sung by men and women who had been sold as slaves but whose souls had remained sensitive to music, the Sega is nowadays a folksong which has integrated itself within the framework of their folklore.

Traditionally stimulated and inspired by local rum, the dancers would do so without music as such, but accompanied only by the sound of the “Ravanne”, the tinkling of spoons, the rattling of seeds/sand in a tin, and the clapping of hands of spectators who eventually join in.

If you attend a Sega show and join in, you will definitely be enchanted and impressed.

SALT OF PALMAR

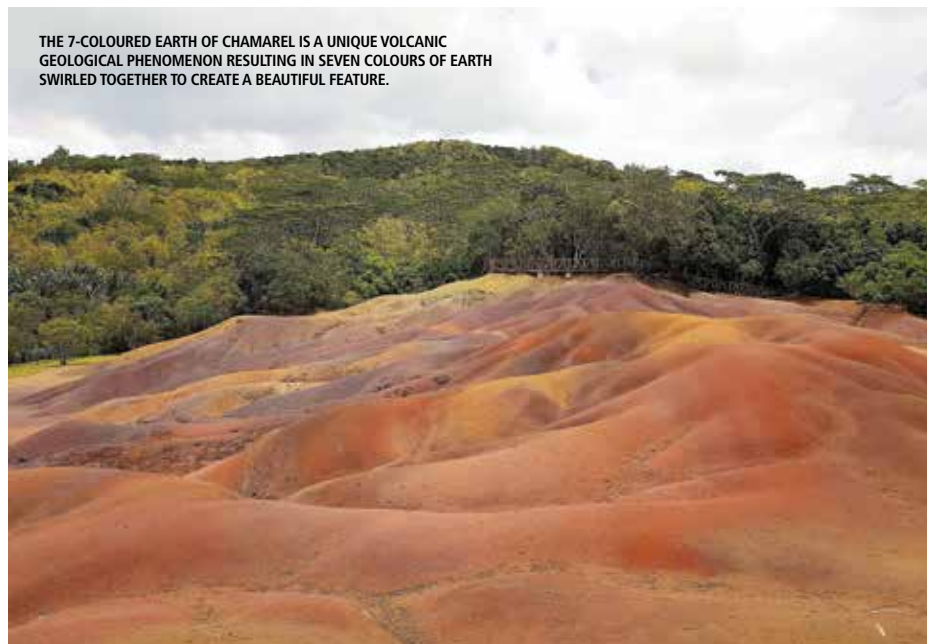
Set on a picture-perfect beach overlooking the Indian Ocean on the east coast of Mauritius, SALT of Palmar is redefining the hotel stay with a humanistic approach to hospitality for the culturally curious traveller. Its vibrant colours reflect the colourful people and culture of Mauritius and you will be in awe of where to point your camera first. In addition to the visual appeal, what makes SALT so unique is the fact that guests will be immersed into the very heart of the destination, giving guests a sense of being home and living like a local.

A stay here is more than just somewhere to rest your head at night, it is a destination and experience in itself. SALT takes its guests to people - not just places - connecting them to locals and their way of life, placing them in the action, not just beside it. Their unique skill swap approach gives guests the opportunity to connect directly with locals where they exchange their time, talent and skills to the local people, while joining local suppliers to see their work or passion.

This includes pottery with Janine at her Pamplemousses studio, early morning fishing with Kishor, or basket weaving with Mrs Bulleeram in Brisée Verdière. During their stay,



THE 7-COLOURED EARTH OF CHAMAREL IS A UNIQUE VOLCANIC GEOLOGICAL PHENOMENON RESULTING IN SEVEN COLOURS OF EARTH SWIRLED TOGETHER TO CREATE A BEAUTIFUL FEATURE.



guests can also get hands on experience and learn with the hotel staff and network of experts. You can help on the SALT Farm, learn how to cook Mauritian Chicken Curry with the chefs and even master the maravanne rattle and moutia drum.

THE 7-COLOURED EARTH OF CHAMAREL

A world-famous

attraction, the 7-coloured earth of Chamarel, is a unique volcanic geological phenomenon resulting in seven colours of earth swirled together to create a beautiful feature. Found in the Chamarel region, this is a treasure not to be missed.

Chamarel rises 283m above sea level and is reached by a short scenic walk which cuts through the luxurious tropical forest surrounding it. There are many places to stop to admire the exquisite view and take photos. One of these spots is an 83m high waterfall.

HIKE LE MORNE BRABANT MOUNTAIN

Step into the history of Mauritius, literally, and hike on the path of the runaway slaves at Le Morne Brabant. Located at the south-western

tip of Mauritius, this rocky peninsula has a summit which looks over the area of Le Morne and out to sea. Get into the heart of nature while you experience both the extreme opposites of lush greenery together with the rough and dry patches of the World Heritage Site.

As you ascend, you will witness the captivating features of the mountain, whereby there are many caves and overhangs on the steep slopes. Generally surrounded by the lagoon, Le Morne Brabant is worth trying to climb for sunrise for a spectacular birds' eye view.

WILD DOLPHIN SWIM

When staying at LUX* Le Morne, you can head out on a Wild Dolphin Experience for a truly wild encounter with the local wildlife. Take a boat out and strap on those fins, snorkel and mask before jumping into the warm waters of Mauritius where you can meet spinner and bottlenose dolphins as they congregate in large numbers in the bay.

These dolphins are not enticed by food, nor contained. They are completely free, so swimming with them can be a challenge if you are not a good swimmer. When they do come to interact and play however, you can have a life changing experience with these inquisitive animals. Even if you do not get in the water with them, watching them from the boat is just as exciting. Sperm and humpback whales also migrate along the west coast of the island and

STEP INTO THE HISTORY OF MAURITIUS, LITERALLY, AND HIKE ON THE PATH OF THE RUNAWAY SLAVES AT LE MORNE BRABANT.



A VISIT TO MAURITIUS IS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT TASTING SOME OF THEIR LOCAL RUM.



can be spotted if you're lucky.

Situated in the South West part of Mauritius, in the heart of a fertile valley lies the Rhumerie de Chamarel which is surrounded by vast sugarcane plantations growing in harmony with the pineapples and other tropical fruits nearby.

RUM TASTING AT RHUMERIE DE CHAMAREL

Mauritius is famous for its rum, and one of the most famous spots to try this rum is the Rhumerie de Chamarel Distillery. Rhumerie de Chamarel offers a holistic experience to guests, as you marvel at its unique design which blends harmoniously with the spectacular surroundings where wood, natural stone and water provide a sense of communion with nature.

A guided tour with one of the experienced guides will take you behind the scenes to provide a detailed explanation of the rum making process where all the sugar cane plants are



A visit starts with a peaceful walk around a spiral path lined with rocks, as you repeat a mantra. You then lay in an area surrounded by coloured huts and meditate for some 20 minutes. Once complete, you then proceed to the coloured hut that represents the colour most present in your meditation and spend time in that particular hut healing with the energy from the vortex. It is not for everyone, but interesting to try if you are curious.

FOOD TOUR OF PORT LOUIS

To get a real taste of Mauritius while learning about the culture and history, jump on a street food tour of Port Louis. Taste Buddies offer tours to explore the streets of Port Louis by foot and mouth. Led by a local guide and driven by your curiosity, this culinary journey takes you deep in the heart of the capital of Mauritius.

Starting at the Caudan Waterfront, you walk through Port Louis and stop at the best food spots for bite-sized delights. Sink your teeth into a warm roti, take a sip of freshly-squeezed juice, and let the flavours fuse. It truly is the way to experience the island's authenticity. ❖

Pocket Guide



AIR MAURITIUS

www.airmauriti.us.com

Stay at the **LUX* Le Morne**

www.luxresorts.com/en/hotel-mauritius/luxlemorne

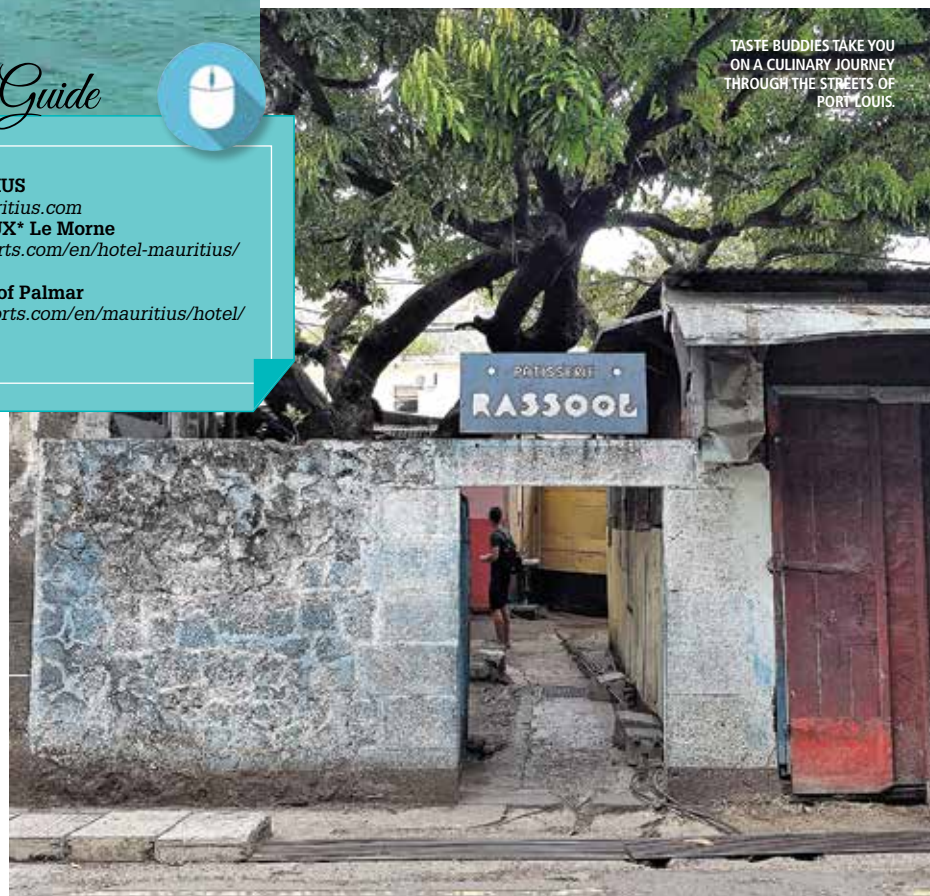
Stay at **SALT of Palmar**

www.saltresorts.com/en/mauriti.us/hotel/saltofpalmar

carefully selected and grown at the domain. Finish off the tour with a unique rum tasting, where one can try the selection of the agricultural rums produced by the distillery. As opposed to the traditional rum produced by the distillation of molasses, the agricultural rum is obtained by distilling pure cane juice, a process which gives it its specific aromas and flavours.

THE VORTEX AT RIAMBEL

There are in all fourteen vortices in the world and one of these can be found at Riambel in Mauritius. Located in the small village of Riambel in the south of the island, this vortex is where energy with intense vibratory levels flows. The energy travels in spirals through the vortex regulating the energetic disbalance within those who sit there for at least 20 minutes.



TASTE BUDDIES TAKE YOU ON A CULINARY JOURNEY THROUGH THE STREETS OF PORT LOUIS.