

PLACES



Revellers taking part in a street parade during the International 'Carnaval' of Victoria on Mahe island

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Bird Island is truly amazing. It is the most northerly island of the Seychelles. Bought by the present owners in 1967, it was once a plantation. A small hotel was built to enable people to enjoy the abundant wildlife. There are millions of birds, and to sit on my verandah, surrounded by orange cordia and white frangipani trees, watching white-tailed tropics, lesser noddies and the little red Mad-agascar fodies was such a treat. They wander in your door and sit on the furniture. One insisted on sitting on my packet of fags and wouldn't get up. A health-conscious avian.

Robby has been the conservationist here for 30 years and a nature walk with him is a must. He pointed out a white-tailed tropic feeding her young with sardines and furry chicks with their mums. His love for the wildlife is infectious. He appears to know the meaning of every sound the birds make and he makes them back. We had our own Dr Dolittle tortoise stroll

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past our verandah too. Esmer-alda, who is reported to be the oldest tortoise in the world, lives here. He is very heavy and breaks the scales, is very old, and likes the shade. I felt a real affinity with him (despite the name, he's a boy). My soul-mate. Not too fond of the intense heat, struggles with the weight, and getting old. Lots of similarities.

Nick Savy is the son of the man who purchased the island in 1967 and runs the lodge now. His great grandmother was an O'Sullivan from Cork, and his gorgeous little

four-year-old daughter Isla has inherited the red hair. His mum loved Ireland and regularly went there for St Patrick's Day. Sadly, she passed away last year on, believe it or not, March 17.

My final day of hedonism was back on Mahe in the Hilton Northholme. Small and perfectly formed. Again I had my own beautiful villa with a stunning view out over the bay. Eddie from Glasgow is the executive cluster chef for the three Hilton hotels in the Seychelles, and boy does he know how to lay on a feast. Coconut-crusting shrimp, passion fruit and chilli for starters and then the best fillet steak I think I've ever had. Then I had an aromatherapy massage looking out over the clear waters and before some more sunbathing. What more could a girl want?

I was now nearly as laid back as the locals. Who wouldn't be — surrounded by idyllic beaches, turquoise waters and clear, blue skies.

GETTING THERE

MAHE ISLAND (SEYCHELLES)



Classic Resorts have a three-centre holiday based on flights with Etihad Airways via Abu Dhabi in September.

Hilton Northholme for five nights B&B in a king hillside room.

Bird Island for three nights on full board in a bungalow.

Raffles Seychelles for five nights' B&B in a garden pool villa

The price also includes domestic flights and Cat cocos ferry crossing
Based on two sharing for 13 nights from €4299pp including flights, taxes, transfers and accommodations
Classic Resorts, 24 -25 Lower Liffey Street, Dublin 1. Tel: 01 8745000
Email: info@classicresorts.ie
classicresorts.ie
seychelles.travel



Eleanor gets up close to her new friend

TAKE THREE Top attractions



Flora and Fauna

It's a nature lover's paradise. Birds of every size and colour sit cheekily next to you. It's a cacophony of sound. You can swim with turtles, and snorkelling is huge here because of the vast array of fish in the waters. There are more than 1000 species of plants in the granitic Seychelles. Hibiscus, frangipani and bougainvillea are plentiful. The majestic palms and coconut trees make the Seychelles akin to a botanical garden.



Bird Island

Bird Island is a must. Nature at its best. Respect for the wildlife is essential. The ethos is that we humans are visitors on their island. Robby the conservationist is brilliant. He pointed out the details of the anatomy of the tortoise. Poos, peeps and penis, the three 'p's' under one flap. Information I will never forget. Michel Roux honeymooned here and is coming back later in the year. Oliver Reed was also a visitor to the lodge.



Food

Fish is unbelievably bountiful and red snapper is huge. They tend to serve it whole, cooked over charcoal. Shellfish is on every menu and Creole style fish curries are popular. Prawns are often served in a curry. Lots of dishes are cooked in coconut milk. Papayas, mangoes and many amazing fruits that I had never seen before are all divine. Beer is made locally and they make a vanilla-flavoured rum, Takamaka.