

Mauritius Educational 2013

With If Only.... and Emirates Airlines



Mauritius – as a destination

I have totally fallen in love with the paradise that is Mauritius. As well as being stunningly beautiful with miles of soft sandy beaches, turquoise waters and lush green landscapes, the island being small (the size of Surrey) is very accessible, meaning unlike in the Maldives, you can explore the island and are not confined to your resort. The thing that impressed me most was the Mauritian people. They are the most genuinely friendly and hospitable I have ever met. They have such a natural friendliness and cannot do enough for you. Another thing which is great about Mauritius is that the main language spoken is English.

When to go

Although hot all year round, the best time to go is October through to April. Mauritius has rain all year but the rain comes in short sharp bursts. The island has its own micro climate so the weather can vary over a very short distance.

What to do in Mauritius

Beaches – protected by the Coral reefs, the waters are gentle, perfect for swimming and great for children as the waters are very safe. Beaches are sandy.

Water sports & activities – snorkelling, scuba diving, water skiing, kite surfing & sailing but NO jet skiing.

Culture – Two World Heritage sites, the Capital of Port Louis, The Tea Route, Sugar Cane Adventure

Nature- Pamplemousse Botanical Gardens, Casela Nature and Leisure Park

Activities- Hiking in the Black Rivers Gorges and the Ferney Valley, helicopter trips, cable rides, quad biking

Sea trips – Beautiful catamaran trips, sailing, safari submarines, speed boat trips and deep sea fishing

Shopping – Capital city of Port Louis and the bustling town of Grand Baie

My Mauritius Adventure

On Wednesday 13th May 2013 I met my group of six at London Gatwick and we set off for our adventure to Mauritius. My small group, hosted by Neil Sealy were to become my family for the next week and in no time we had become the best of friends!

Our flights were with Emirates with a two hour touchdown in Dubai. The in-direct flights did feel long but I was very impressed with Emirates and everything went extremely smoothly and efficiently. Our luggage was carried though at Dubai, giving us time to relax for our next flight.

Our first night was spent at **Heritage Le Telfair Golf and Spa**. We received the warmest welcome from Thierry and the team at Heritage.

Heritage Le Telfair Golf and Spa 5*



One of my particular favourites, I was most impressed with this property because it was so pretty. The buildings are situated in small manor houses and they are particularly charming. The grounds are also very pretty, with attractive buildings and lush colourful gardens and grounds. This property had a very friendly atmosphere and you immediately felt at home although at the same time the standards here were exceptionally high. This hotel had the most incredibly beautiful spa, the Seven Colours Spa. This was the best spa on the Island in my opinion.

Rooms: 158 rooms – Superior / Junior Suites / Senior Suites and Ocean Suites. Heritage Villas also available.

Highlights: Golf course, trendy C Beach Club (day and night), beautiful breakfast venue – Annabellas, and beachfront restaurant Asian Gin’ga. Guests can also use facilities of the African inspired resort next door, the Heritage Awali.

Style: Elegant, charming, romantic, friendly, calm and serene.

Perfect for: Couples

Day two included visits to St Regis, LUX Le Morne and Sugar Beach

St Regis Mauritius Resort 5*



This hotel had the best attention to detail and felt to me the most indulgent and luxurious. It has a very exclusive and private feel to it, where the service is discreet but exceptional with Butlers for every room. The resort was very classy with grand colonial style buildings. Decoration is sophisticated with neutral tones and a very contemporary feel.

Rooms: 172 rooms – Ocean deluxe / Beachfront Junior Suites / Beachfront St Regis Suites / Beachfront St Regis Grand Suites / Oceanview Manor Houses / One bedroom St Regis Villa and Two bedroom St Regis Villa

Highlights: The stunning Le Morne Beach. Cuisine is key at St Regis with 8 restaurants to choose from including Atul Kochkar's Indian restaurant and the relaxed Boathouse Grill & Bar with weekly beachside BBQ

Style: Contemporary, indulgent, peace and tranquillity

Perfect for: Couples, families with older children. Those who like privacy.

LUX* Le Morne 5*



This LUX resort was calm and peaceful with a very relaxed feel to it. Set against the stunning backdrop of the Morne Mountains, the resort offers a tranquil retreat in a very natural setting, with lush gardens and lots of wood and stone.

Rooms: 149 rooms – Superior rooms / Junior Suites / Honeymoon Junior Suites / Prestige Junior Suites / Ocean Junior Suite

Highlights: The stunning mountainous backdrop, The Kitchen – elegant but relaxed open kitchen dining, the quirky LUX touches like free ice cream, free calls home, gifts throughout the day

Style: Natural setting, laid back atmosphere, retreat to get away from it all

Perfect for: Couples

Sugar Beach 5*



This hotel, set amongst wonderful, landscaped gardens had a friendly, welcoming feel. The resort has a light, bright and jolly atmosphere. The plantation style resort has been refurbished and now offers spacious, comfortable rooms of excellent standard.

Rooms: 258 rooms – Standard rooms / Superior rooms / Villa Suites / Family Units

Highlights: Tides Seafood Restaurant on the beach, excellent selection of children's clubs and facilities (2 – 17 years) Golf access at Le Touessrok. Bonfire parties on the beach. Can use facilities of neighbouring Le Pirogue.

Style: Fun, chilled out, relaxed

Perfect for: Young couples, young friends, families with all age children

At the end of Day Two we made our way to the Maritim for our overnight stay. We were lucky enough to dine in their fine-dining restaurant – 'Château Mon Désir' which is incredible.

Maritim 5*



This hotel oozes class and style. It is luxurious and lavish but with a calming ambience. The hotel is picturesquely framed by a 25 hectare green tropical garden and nature park and lies on 'Turtle Bay' a marine National Park. This hotel offers a serene, relaxed environment but with the opportunity of various activities if wanted. Activities offered are the 9 hole golf course, mini golf, spa, gym, tennis, croquet, the Boat house with water sports and diving, horse-riding, turtle centre and mini zoo for the children.

Rooms: 215 rooms with sea view - privilege room, prestige rooms, suites, villas

Highlights: The exceptional dining venues - 'Château Mon Désir' fine dining and *La Marée* beach restaurant. Weekly evening entertainment and musicians create a lively, fun evening atmosphere with dancing into the night. The only 9 hole golf course on the island.

Style: classy, sophisticated, elegant, romantic,

Perfect for: Couples, those that like things to do

Day three and we are visiting Paradise Cove, LUX* Grand Gaube and Veranda Paul and Virginie Hotel.

Paradise Cove Hotel and Spa 4*



This boutique hotel had the most calm, tranquil ambience of all the hotels. It was peaceful and so quiet. It's a warm, friendly haven for total rest and relaxation and is great for those wanting to escape and unwind. The hotel focuses on the body and mind in stunning landscaped grounds surrounded by a private creek. The rooms have a typical Mauritian style with vibrant colours, the grounds are very natural and the gardens are full of beautiful flowers.

Rooms: 67 rooms – Pondichery, 1001 nights, Junior Suites, Senior Maharani, Maharajah Suites

Highlights: This hotel is adults only. The hotel has a 'retreat' feel perfect for escaping.

Style:

Perfect for: Couples, adults, those wanting to escape, spa lovers

LUX* Grand Gaube 5*



This hotel is situated around a pretty crescent shaped bay and is set within beautifully maintained grounds with endless tropical flowers. This hotel is ideal for those who want to get out and about during their holiday as it is within close proximity to the town of Grand Baie offering a good selection of shops, boutiques, a harbour, cafes, restaurants and bars. The resort has a relaxed, laid back atmosphere but with a great level of service with all of the typical LUX* features.

Rooms: 198 rooms. Superior, Ocean Superior, Deluxe, Junior Suites, Senior Suites and Emperor Suites

Highlights: The close proximity to Grand Baie is a great selling point

Style: Laid back, mellow atmosphere

Perfect for: Young couples, I generally think LUX* are best suited to young couple

Veranda Paul & Virginie Hotel and Spa 3*



This hotel is named after the legendary young couple immortalised by the French author Bernardin de St Pierre in his novel Paul & Virginie. The hotel offers a relaxing and romantic stay enhanced by idyllic tranquility and a quiet, soothing atmosphere. The decor of colonial inspiration, a subtle combination of wood, stone and thatch roofs, reveals a peaceful haven for couples seeking an unforgettable getaway to paradise island. This hotel is the most economical hotel offered by If Only but despite this the standards, service, food are excellent. The beach is small compared to most and the rooms are more basic but the resort is clean, friendly and in a great location.

Rooms: 81 rooms. Comfort, standard and privilege

Highlights: The picturesque beach restaurant.

Style: Peaceful haven

Perfect for: Those looking for great value for money. Couples, young friends

At the end of day three we made our way to the Constance Belle Mare Plage for a two night stay and we were certainly in for a real treat.

Constance Belle Mare Plage 5*



One of my favourite resorts, this property is for me has it all. It has a stunning sandy beach with clear turquoise waters, large spacious luxury rooms, excellent spa, outstanding restaurant facilities, exceptionally friendly staff and an immaculate golf course. The rooms were the best I stayed in, superb quality and so spacious.

Rooms: 256 rooms. Prestige, Junior Suite, Deluxe Suite, Villas with private pools and One Presidential Villa

Highlights: The 'Blue Penny' fine dining restaurant. Two complimentary 18 hole championship golf courses. Villa accommodation with private pools and butler service.

Style: Luxury, immaculate, exceptional standards.

Perfect for: Couples, families, honeymooners, golfers

The next morning we were up early and off for a day on a **Catamaran Cruise of the East coast of the Island**. The Catamaran held 26 passengers but we were lucky as there were only 14 on board, so lots of space for sunbathing and taking in the incredible views. The cruise, which can be arranged by If Only... through White Sand Tours is most certainly worth doing. It really was a fantastic day, one that I won't forget for a long time.

We anchored up in the clearest, turquoise waters and were given the opportunity for swimming and snorkelling. Next stop was the beautiful waterfalls of Grand Riviere Sud-Est and then a wonderful freshly cooked Barbeque lunch.



In the afternoon we made our way to the world famous Ile aux Cerfs, and it really was as stunning as I hoped with pristine blue waters and soft white strips of sand. We spent about three hours here swimming in the warm, clear waters and sunbathing on the beautiful beach.



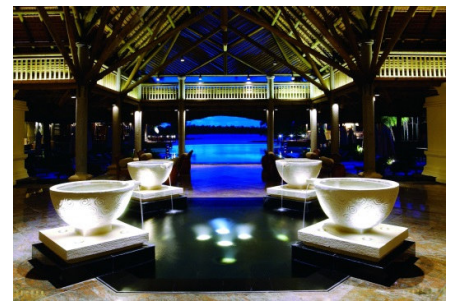
This trip is a must when visiting Mauritius, however **White Sand Tours** (who also arrange all the transfers for If Only.. guests) offer a great selection of other cruises, like 'Sailing the Dolphin Coast', or the 'Sunset Cruise'. They also offer land tours, action packed tours like hiking and speedboat excursions, cultural tours, shopping tours and exclusive privately arranged trips. The staff are all exceptionally efficient, professional and friendly.



Our host, Neil, Sealy from If Only... enjoying the cruise

Following our wonderful day on the cruise we were set for a wonderful evening too, with dinner and a visit at Constance Le Prince Maurice.

Constance Le Prince Maurice 5*



A totally indulgent tropical hideaway, where stunning architectural design meets relaxed luxury. Elegant and striking, this hotel will seduce you from the moment you arrive, it certainly has the wow factor. Inspired by the spice route, and Prince Orange of Nassau, set within 60 hectares of unspoilt tropical gardens, and sheltered from off-shore winds, this exclusive hotel of just 76 suites and 13 villas is a high-class deluxe paradise. Intimate and wonderfully stylish, it makes for an ideal honeymoon destination, or for anyone looking for a romantic and secluded getaway. Families enjoy the beach-side villas and superb children's club 'Les Petits Princes'.

Rooms: 89 rooms. 64 Junior suites, 12 Family suites, 12 Villas or the sumptuous Princely suite

Highlights: The most breath-taking lobby have ever seen. One of the Leading Hotels of the World. Barefoot dining at Beach Deck and the stunning floating restaurant Le Barchois. The only 'villas on stilts' on the island.

Style: Indulgent and totally luxurious, class, small, romantic and intimate

Perfect for: Couples, honeymooners, families, golfers

Day five included visits to Four Seasons Resort at Anahita and Le Toussrok.

Fours Seasons Resort at Anahita 5*



This resort has the most impressive setting, sheltered by the Bambou mountains. It offers a sense of total tranquillity but with luxury in every aspect. The resort is designed with connections to the natural surroundings so there are lots of influences of wood and rustic features but with a contemporary feel. This resort is lush and green and has its own private island, Ile aux Chats where many of the villas are situated.

Rooms: 123 rooms. All Villas and Residences. (All have at least a plunge pool, many have private pools)

Highlights: Best children's club and facilities on the island. Ernie Els 18 hole golf course. Floating restaurant.

Style: Sanctuary-style resort. Retreat style with natural surroundings. Private and secluded.

Perfect for: Couples, families, golfers

Le Touessrok 5*



Le Touessrok is set in a truly sensational location, comprising of four separate areas. A wooden bridge links the main resort to Frangipani Island where the Givenchy spa, Barlen's restaurant and some of the suites are situated. There is also the spectacular Ile Aux Cerfs, just a five minute boat ride away, home to the 18 hole golf course and Ilot Mangenie which features an exclusive paradise island restaurant (we ate lobster here!!) This hotel is one of the Leading hotels of the World and it is easy to see why. It is very aesthetically impressive, my only concern was that the resort is a little rigid and formal, not as relaxed as many of the others, in my opinion lacked 'soul and atmosphere'. Also (in my opinion) the rooms were not as impressive as many of the others.

Rooms: 200 rooms. Deluxe, Ocean Suites, Junior Suites, The Royal Suite and Villas.

Highlights: Taking the speedboat to the private island of Ilot Mangenie and eating lobster at the private island restaurant. The golf course on Ile Aux Cerfs has to be one of the World's best visually.

Style: Luxury, contemporary, chic

Perfect for: Couples, golfers, those who like to go to places with iconic status

Our final evening and our last day was spent at the wonderful Preskil Beach Resort.

Preskil Beach Resort 4*



This was one of my favourite hotels. Although a 4*, this hotel has loads to offer. The beach is beautiful, the rooms are presented to a very high standard, the lush tropical grounds are impeccably maintained, the food is excellent and the resort has such a genuinely welcoming, friendly yet relaxed atmosphere which makes you feel so comfortable. The resort is on a secluded peninsula with views across to Ile aux Aigrettes, a bird sanctuary. The hotel has many great places to eat but we were lucky enough to eat at Charka (renowned as the best steakhouse on the island) and the beachfront Tapas restaurant, the food was delicious. We were lucky enough to be spoilt with a heavenly massage at the divine Ylang Spa.

Rooms: 200 rooms. Lagoon, Prestige and Cottage rooms and Deluxe Penthouse

Highlights: The friendliness of the staff and the resort. The Charka Restaurant. The Ylang Spa.

Style: calm, casual, serene, welcoming.

Perfect for: Couples, honeymooners, families with young children



Lunch at Preskil at the Tapas restaurant

Summary:

My favourite hotels: 1)Heritage Le Telfair 2) Constance Belle Mare Plage 3) Preskil Beach Resort

Best for...Luxury	St Regis Mauritius
Best for...Spa	Heritage Le Telfair
Best for...families	Four Seasons at Anahita
Best for...young couples	Preskil Beach Resort
Best... value for money	Constance Belle Mare Plage
Best...wow factor	Constance Prince Maurice
Best for...friendliness	Hertiage Le telfair / Preskil Beach Resort
Best for...mind & body	Paradise Cove
Best for...boutique	Paradise Cove
Best...dining	Constance Belle Mare Plage – The ‘Blue Penny’
Best ...beach	St Regis Mauritius
Best... grounds and gardens	Maritim
Best for ...wedding / honeymoon	Heritage Le Telfair
Best for... indulgence	St Regis Mauritius / Four Seasons
Bestfor tight budgets	Veranda Paul & Virginie

In conclusion, I am totally in love with Mauritius and already planning to go back. The island has so much to offer, being accessible as well as beautiful. Mauritius has something to suit every client, from couples to families, from tight budgets to ‘moneys no object budgets’! If I was to go again, I may consider the BA or Air Mauritius direct flights, however I certainly have nothing to complain about regarding Emirates, they are a great airline.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank If Only...and Neil Sealy for this wonderful, unforgettable trip.

If you need any advice on choosing a Hotel or any information on Mauritius itself I would be more than happy to help. Please contact me.

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