

Dreaming of an Island Holiday?

Deidre Donnelly rounds up options for the ultimate in R&R.

If you're looking for:

going places

FLAVOURFUL ROMANCE

Mauritius



Why go? Surrounded by sandy beaches and turquoise seas, with isles and inlets, Mauritius is sure to seduce your senses.

In search of culture? The country's explorer past is present in a multiethnic population, with influences from Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Listen to indigenous Sega (percussion-type) or Creole (rap and raggamuffin-style) music.

Feast on ... A fusion of Chinese, Indian and French cuisine with plenty of seafood.

Where to stay: Planning a wedding? **La Pirogue** has a lush garden setting, impressive views and offers beachside dinners. Nuptials can be conducted in a gazebo or on the beach. A décor enthusiast's dream, the **Sugar Beach Resort's** balconies have daybeds, and the spa offers couples' treatments.

Getting there: Air Mauritius has 10 flights to the island from OR Tambo every week and offers direct flights from Cape Town.

For details, visit sugarbeachresort.com, lapirogue.com and mauritius.net

TOTAL PRIVACY

St. Helena

Why go? Far from the madding crowd, this island sports dramatic scenery.

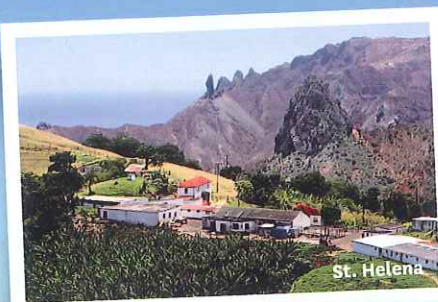
In search of culture? History buffs will appreciate the island for its heritage. Once a stopover for ships travelling between Asia, Europe and Africa, it was also home to Napoleon in exile, and the site of an observatory set up by famed astronomer Edmond Halley in 1676.

Feast on ... Malay, Chinese and British-style food. Braver palates can sample the local prickly pear spirit, Tungi.

Where to stay: Accommodation is fairly basic, but you'll feel like you've stepped back in time overnight at the 18th-century **Consulate Hotel**, in Jamestown, or the former East India Company planter's house, **Farm Lodge Country House Hotel**.

Getting there: The only way is on the **RMS St. Helena**, which leaves from Cape Town.

For details, visit sthelenatourism.com



FLORA AND FAUNA

Madagascar

Why go? Nature-lovers will appreciate the biodiversity hot spot for its many lemur species, baobabs and 369 kinds of coral.

In search of culture? The former pirate kingdom offers tours of the world's only pirate cemetery and dives to shipwrecks.

Feast on ... Crab curry, zebu steak, and a cocktail of coconut milk and *pastis*.

Where to stay: You can watch humpback whales (between July and September) from the three-star **Hotel Soanambo** on St. Marie Island. And on the north of the main island is NosyBe beach, where **Hotel Andilana Beach** is a sure bet.

Getting there: There are five weekly flights to the capital, Antananarivo, from SA (via AirLink, Air Madagascar or Air Mauritius), and you can travel by boat to St. Marie from the main island.

For details, visit nosybe.com, madagascarhotels-direct.com, and madagascarconsulate.org.za 

