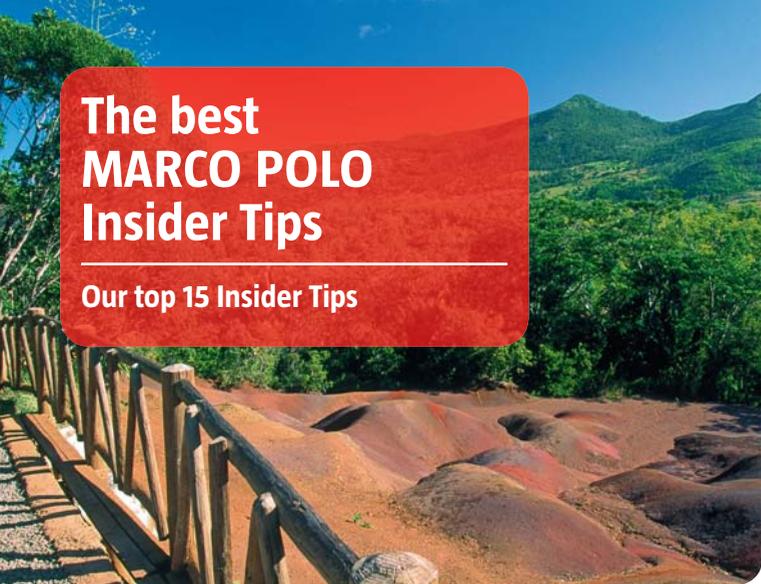


The best MARCO POLO Insider Tips

Our top 15 Insider Tips



INSIDER TIP Sweet temptation

Find out how sugar is made from sugar cane with a visit to the L'Aventure du Sucre Museum in Beau Plan → p. 39

INSIDER TIP Hiking and paddling

The tours from Yemaya Adventures don't just provide a physical challenge, but also an unforgettable experience in beautiful natural surroundings → p. 43

INSIDER TIP A mountain route with a special view

The road to Nouvelle Découverte, which runs along the La Nicolière reservoir, opens up on both sides, giving a splendid view of the natural scenery → p. 43

INSIDER TIP The jeunesse dorée of Mauritius

The island's young, fashionable and wealthy inhabitants like to start their week with a drink in the Cybercity, the high-tech industrial zone of Port Louis → p. 83

INSIDER TIP A herb for every ailment

In the central market in Port Louis, two herbalists offer special teas to help you cope with a wide variety of problems and ailments → p. 54

INSIDER TIP Beautiful views

The golf course at the elegant Hotel Belle Mare Plage is possibly one of the most beautiful in the world. It's not just beginners who'll find it a challenge → p. 60

INSIDER TIP Rigging and nautical tales

The National History Museum in Mahébourg offers insights into the island's short but exciting history → p. 62

INSIDER TIP Dedicated, painstaking work

Naturalists are trying to replant the coastal forest on Île aux Aigrettes, their goal being to restore the island's vegetation to its original state → p. 65

INSIDER TIP A freshly brewed flavour

Direct from the plantation to your cup: after a tour, the secrets of how these aromatic, delicate leaves are cultivated will be revealed to you during a tasting session in the Bois Chéri Tea Factory → p. 75

INSIDER TIP Shimmering earth

The ground glows with colours that range from red to blue and purple to ochre: this patch of earth with its fascinating shades came to light in the Vallée des 23 Couleurs during construction work in 1998. It's a colourful illustration of Mauritius' volcanic past (photo left) → p. 75

INSIDER TIP À la mode de Paris

Whether it's colourful fabrics and unusual materials you're after, or chic jeans and other reasonably priced items, bargain hunters will find the very thing at the Quatre Borne clothes market. Woven straw bags and souvenirs are also on offer → p. 82

INSIDER TIP A paradise for surfing freaks

Secret tip number 1 for windsurfers and kitesurfers is the area around Morne Brabant at the southwestern point of the island (photo below) → p. 95

INSIDER TIP Action-packed: guaranteed

A full programme: the free @sun generation.com clubs offer fun activities for teens. With a full programme of outings and disco nights, not one second of their holiday will be boring → p. 97

INSIDER TIP Adventure for water lovers

In Le Waterpark & Leisure Village in Belle Mare, you can have fun splashing around and diving in the cool waters. Enjoy making full use of the wave pool and the high speed slides → p. 98

INSIDER TIP A joyful celebration

Divali is a Hindu festival that lasts several days and celebrates the victory of good over evil. Many houses are decorated with lights during the festivities → p. 101



BEST OF ...

GREAT PLACES FOR FREE

Discover new places and save money

● *Aapravasi Ghat*

Once upon a time this part of the harbour of Port Louis was a landing area and detention centre for immigrants arriving here to find work from the 19th century onwards. Although there are only a few remnants of the complex in existence today, the free tour gives an insight into the island's history → p. 47

● *The shell collector*

The poet Robert Edward Hart (1891–1954) lived in a small house on the picturesque south coast from 1941. The façade is completely covered with mussels and coral, something that would be forbidden today. Inside, they've preserved the poet's furniture and personal belongings. A quiet and peaceful place → p. 74

● *A view with music*

Fort Adelaide rises over Port Louis on top of the 100m/330ft-high Petite Montagne. Architecturally, the fortifications provide little of interest, but the view is fantastic and sometimes free concerts and other shows are also held in the inner courtyard → p. 49

● *Buried beneath the palm trees*

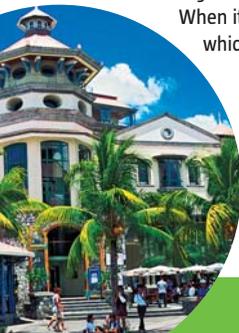
Opposite the island's oldest church is the *Pamplemousses Cemetery*, an enchanting place with many historic graves. The cemetery's occupants include Emmeline de Carcenac, known as Dame Creole, who was written about by Charles Baudelaire → p. 39

● *Pounding surf*

Gigantic waves break on the cliffs at the southern tip of the island. When it's windy, the elements perform an impressive spectacle here, which is why there's also a viewing platform at *Cap Gris Gris* → p. 73

● *A symphony in the pedestrian zone*

At weekends Mauritian bands come and play at the harbour and in the pedestrian zone of the *Caudan Waterfront Complex*. They start in the afternoon and carry on late into the evening. Everything's represented, from pop and jazz to sega and reggae (photo) → p. 53



●●● Dots in guidebook refer to 'Best of ...' tips

ONLY IN MAURITIUS

Unique experiences

● *On horseback*

Horse racing has been held on the *Champ de Mars* in Port Louis since 1812, making it the oldest racecourse in the southern hemisphere. However, you won't encounter signs of age or an atmosphere of snobbery here. Rather, you can enjoy the carnival atmosphere as all of Mauritius gathers to place their bets. → p. 48

● *Try on a sari*

Goodlands is the shopping city of the north and many shops line its main street. It's packed on market days when farmers and traders bring their goods to town. Indian fashions are sold as well as fruit, vegetables and spices. It's a dazzling explosion of colour → p. 38



● *Vegetables by bike*

Mauritians love snacks, and cheap filled pastries are sold everywhere, though there are usually only one or two varieties on offer. On the beach at *Grand Baie*, the sellers offer a veritable buffet of exotic snacks from a long row of stalls → p. 33

● *Dancing on the hot sand*

At weekends, Mauritian families meet on the public beaches to have a picnic. They usually come to the beach loaded with pre-cooked food. The festive atmosphere grows steadily as people begin to play and dance to traditional Segua music. A real experience (photo) → p. 35

● *Forget the aquarium – visit the harbour*

Fish is expensive on Mauritius. If you want to buy it cheaply, wait for the fishermen at the harbour. Most harbours have fish landing stations where they sell the previous night's catch around midday. Above all, however, when you come here, you'll get an impression of the Indian Ocean's marvellous, colourful fauna → p. 33

● *Family visits in the New Year*

Only a very few Mauritians work in the first week of January and many businesses are closed. It's also a time when families travel everywhere on the island with their children, either to visit relatives, or to observe the tradition of getting new clothes at this time of year. It can almost seem like a mass exodus of people is taking place → p. 100

ONLY IN

THE PERFECT ROUTE

Experience the many facets of Mauritius on an anti-clockwise tour that begins and ends in Port Louis

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

You'll need a whole day for this car tour that goes once round the whole island. Since it would take an age to get through the traffic jams in the centre of Port Louis, the route begins to the south of the capital city and ends on its northern edge. You can also start at any point on the route, or stop at any moment and take a trip through the island's interior.

ORIGINAL MAURITIUS

The beaches at the beginning of the route are hardly touched by tourism and the biggest attraction in some of the places you pass through is the supermarket. However, the region also gives an impression of how Mauritius looked once upon a time. **1 Flic en Flac** → p. 80 will meet the demands of tourists looking to party, but you should still break up your trip by taking a walk in **2 Casela Nature & Leisure Park** → p. 84

BETWEEN HIGHLANDS AND LOWLANDS

On the west coast sea salt is obtained in shallow pools all along the road. At **3 Tamarin** → p. 83, the best-known surfing location on the island, the flat plains are overlooked by the Tourelle du Tamarin (photo left). Conversely, the sea in front of **4 Grande Rivière Noire** → p. 71 is very deep, meaning that the harbour is a centre for deep-sea anglers. The slopes of the Black River Gorges National Park rise up on the east of the road and the steep cliffs of the **5 Morne Brabant** → p. 72 soon emerge out of the sea. Then the coast becomes wilder. The poet **Robert Edward Hart** once resided here and today his house is a **6 Museum** → p. 74. The route continues, running past sugar cane fields and through predominantly Muslim villages where the women are sometimes veiled.

DANGEROUS SURF

Beyond **7 Mahébourg** → p. 62, the route travels through the most beautiful area on the island from the jungle to the sea to the north. It's worth making a stop in **8 Kestrel Valley** → p. 65. However, take care: don't forget the time! The flat plains extend around **9 Centre de Flacq** → p. 61. This region is predominantly home to a Hindu population. On a headland they've built the Temple of **10 Sagar Shir Mandir** → p. 61 that looks as though it's floating above the sea. The beaches become ever more picturesque as you travel on. There aren't any villages here, but there are a few villas and luxury hotels. The fact that the sea here can



make navigating ships difficult is reflected in the name of the **11 Cap Malheureux** → p. 40. The view of the islands makes this part of the route very charming indeed.

FROM THE BEACH TO VOLCANIC ROCK

In the north the route travels from **12 Péreybère** → p. 40 through **13 Grand Baie** → p. 33 to **14 Trou aux Biches** → p. 44 and past property owned by lots of rich Mauritians. The beaches, which are beautiful for bathing and snorkelling, are very busy indeed at weekends. Grand Baie, a lively small town, is the region's tourist centre. At **15 Pointe aux Piments** → p. 42 the beaches become stony. The area is littered with lava debris, and the rocks that have been piled up by workers in the fields look like massive, ancient burial mounds. Beyond the fields stand the remains of volcanic craters. The road now leads away from the coast. It's worth making a detour to **16 Triolet** → p. 44 to visit the largest Hindu temple on the island, and to **17 Pamplemousses** → p. 38 where you should have at least a short stroll through the Botanical Garden (photo above left) before heading back to Port Louis.



230km/140mi. Driving time 4 hours.
Recommended travel time: one day.
A detailed map of the route can be found on the back cover, in the road atlas and the pull-out map