



The Seychelles

A tropical garden
of Eden in
the Indian Ocean

The Seychelles are a thousand miles from anywhere. Set off the coast of East Africa, the islands are glittering jewels of tropical paradise with irresistible turquoise toned waves and bright white beaches. They are home to lush cloud forests, pink pineapples, the planet's largest coconut—the coco de mer—and teeming aquatic ecosystems.

Humans didn't find themselves amongst this earthly paradise until the 1770s, though vague sightings of the islands can be traced back to the 12th century. Because of the island nation's remoteness in the Indian Ocean, it served as a key political and trade outpost between Africa and India when aromatic spices were a primary source of wealth. Today, vanilla and coconut groves still provide shade to help recover from the thick heat and the brilliant beaches, which shimmer from thousands of tiny flecks of quartz crystal in the sand from the island's distinctive ancient granite boulders.

The 115-island chain is spread over a vast swath of ocean, riddled with the lore of pirates, buried treasure, gris-gris (the fusion of black magic and herbalism), and the potential for untapped surf. While the islands' beaches regularly rate as amongst the most beautiful in the world, the islands are lesser known for surf. In fact, surf culture is only just beginning to take hold there. This means no surf forecasts or surf shops, which is part of the adventure. While fickle, the Seychelles' surf is ideal for beginner and intermediate surfers during the season, with sporadic days to suit those seeking hollower, slabby reef shelf waves.

With the right blend of local knowledge, creative curiosity and a little luck, there is definitely surf to be found in the Seychelles. Still, it's the kind of place so rich in French Creole culinary fusion, natural beauty, and exotic flora and fauna, that surfing is just part of the otherworldly experience of such a remote locale. ■

01 Once part of ancient Gondwana, the islands' distinctive granite rocks date back 700 million years.