

Celebrations as Mauritius marks 50th year of independence

The Indian Ocean island of Mauritius is marking an important milestone this week, with various events and activities underway to celebrate the island's 50 years of independence, as well as its 26th anniversary as a republic. The official ceremony of the Levé de Drapeau took place at the Champ de Mars racecourse on 12 March and included a flag-raising ceremony, a helicopter display and a colourful cultural sound and light show to showcase the many different and vibrant cultures that makeup Mauritius.

“ We have arrived at Champs de Mars for the flag raising ceremony💎💎💎💎[#ratherbeinmauritius](#)

[#mauritiusindependenceday](#) [#mauritiusindependence](#) [#mauritiusexplored](#) [#mauritius](#) [@mauritiusza](#) [@Biz_Tourism](#)
[@Biz_Lounge](#) [pic.twitter.com/VkpMFsmsPm](#)— Ilse van den Berg (@ilse_vdberg) [March 12, 2018](#) ”

“It is fitting that this venue has been selected to host the official 50th Anniversary celebrations,” states the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA). Founded in 1812, the Champ de Mars is the oldest racecourse in the southern hemisphere and the second oldest in the world. Located in the capital of Port Louis, the track held its first races in June 1812, the same year that British forces took over the island from the French. “156 years later, the country finally declared its independence here at this racecourse – and now today it is the setting for the country’s 50 years of independence celebrations.”

Hand in hand

Mauritius’ Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth underscored that what makes Mauritius unique is the creation of a rainbow nation that necessitated adjustment, tolerance and respect for different faiths and cultures. He stressed that it is therefore apt that the theme for this year’s celebration is *La main dans la main*, as all citizens have walked and continue to walk hand in hand to build the country as one people and one nation.

“Mauritius, small as it is, is connected through the hearts of all of us. We learn from those who are around us and we respect the advice of the older generation in a way that shapes our own vision of how we should fend in life,” the Prime Minister stated.



©Richard Van der Spuy via [123RF](#)

The Mauritius High Commission to South Africa, based in Pretoria, also has an exciting programme of events to mark this historic event, launching the proceedings with a formal dinner to celebrate the Republic's 50th National Day held at the Sheraton Hotel on Friday evening. Also included in the programme are a presence at the annual Alliance Francaise Festival Francophonie being staged at Pretoria Boys' High School till 29 March, and hosting an evening of short films and a cocktail at the Alliance Francaise Pretoria office on 16 March.

Increase in arrivals from South Africa

It is not only the 50th-anniversary celebrations that have kick-started 2018 on a positive note for Mauritius. The January arrivals figure from South Africa was 7,196, an increase of 10.3% from the 2016 figure of 6,522. South Africa remains the fifth highest source market to Mauritius for this period, contributing 5.9% of total market share.



More SA travellers breaking away to Mauritius

16 Feb 2018



A 7% increase in arrivals from South Africa to the paradise island of Mauritius for the year ended December 2017 is further evidence that this Indian Ocean island is a favourite holiday destination for South African travellers, with total annual arrivals at 112,129, compared to 104,834 in 2016. In December. South Africa was the second best source market for arrivals to the destination (behind France) with 20,838 visitors, (up 6.3% from 19,609 in 2016), and claiming a 13.4% share in tourist arrivals for the month.

For the whole year of 2017, South Africa represented an 8.4% share of overall tourist arrivals (that totalled 1,341,860), a slight increase from the 8.2% share for 2016, and was ranked the fifth best performing market (behind France, the UK, Reunion Island and Germany).

With international travel and tourism cited as a key economic driver in Mauritius to create jobs, grow the economy and prosper local communities, this is all good news.

Top 10 best in travel 2018

A further endorsement for the island comes from global travel media company, Lonely Planet which listed Mauritius among the Top 10 countries to visit this year, in its Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2018.



Mauritius in Lonely Planet's top 10 countries to visit in 2018

30 Oct 2017



With its stunning white beaches, dazzling sapphire seas, a warm tropical climate, diverse cultures, delicious cuisine, and an array of exciting sporting and adventure activities, Mauritius presents an abundance of reasons to place it at the top of your bucket list of travel destinations.

It is also just a short, four-hour flight from South Africa, with flights departing from Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. No visa is required for South African travellers, which takes another travel hassle out of deciding where to book your next holiday.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>