



Mauritius

Dear Guests,

The **connections** team welcomes you to Mauritius. We represent your travel company on the island and we will ensure that you have a wonderful and unforgettable stay with us.

We would like to show you the most interesting and beautiful attractions of the island. In this brochure we present you with a series of carefully selected excursions, cruises and other special activities which will let you discover the best parts of the island.

Great care has been taken in the organisation of our itineraries. Our professional tour guides and drivers will ensure that your day with us will be an enriching experience, bringing you in contact with the cultures, religions and cuisine of our multiracial and colourful population.

We are ISO certified since 2002. We are constantly striving to provide and maintain the highest standards of operational and service quality as well as the best available health & safety standards on the island.

Connections is member of AIOM, the Association of Tour Operators in Mauritius.

We hope you will have a wonderful vacation with us.

The Connections Team

Brief History

First Dutch Landing

- 1512** The Portuguese seafarer Pedro Mascarenhas discovers the island.
- 1598** First Dutch Landing. They name the island 'Mauritius' after their Prince Mauritz (Maurice) of Nassau.
- 1638-1710** Dutch colonisation. Deforestation of the Ebony Forests. Extinction of the Dodo.
- 1715** The French annex the island and rename it 'Isle de France'.
- 1735-1746** François Mahé de Labourdonnais governs the island and decisively forms the future of the colony.
- 1767-1772** Pierre Poivre administrates the island together with Gouverneur Dumas. He improves the infrastructure and starts the Botanical Garden of Pamplemousses.
- 1794** France abolishes slavery. Mauritius experiences a very strong resistance by the local sugar planters.
- 1810** The British conquer the island and rename it 'Mauritius'.
- 1835** Slavery is abolished. Indentured labour for the sugar estates is imported from India.
- 1847** The 'Blue Penny' stamp is printed.
- 1864** The first railway goes into service. It operates for 100 years - until 1964.
- 1866-1868** Malaria epidemic – 50,000 deaths.
- 1892** The worst 'cyclone' recorded until then devastates the island.
- 1946** First flights take off for Europe and Africa.
- 1968** Mauritius gains independence from Great Britain.
- 1976** First free elections. Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam becomes the first Prime Minister of an independant Mauritius.
- 1992** 12 March: Mauritius becomes a Republic.



Mauritius

Important Information

Origin	Volcanic – about 10 million years old.
Geography	Southwestern Indian Ocean – just below the Tropic of Capricorn. Latitude 20°a1 south - Longitude 57°a1 east.
Area	1,865 km ² .
Coastline	177 km surrounded by coral reefs.
Highest Peaks	Black River Peak (828 m), Pieter Both (823 m), Le Pouce (812 m).
Climate	Tropical, modified by the southeast trade winds; warm, dry winter (May to November); hot, wet, humid summer (November to May).
Population	1.256.000 (2006 estimate).
Ethnic Groups	Indo-Mauritian 68%, Creole 27%, Sino-Mauritian 3%, Franco-Mauritian 2%.
Religions	Hindu 52%, Christian 28%, Muslim 16.5%.
Languages	English (official), Creole and French more widely used.
Government	Parliamentary democracy – elections every 5 years.
Economy	<p>Since independence in 1968, Mauritius has developed from a low income, agriculturally-based economy to a middle-income diversified economy with growing industrial, financial, and tourism sectors. For most of this period, annual growth has been of the order of 5% to 6%.</p> <p>A stock exchange was established in 1989 with the aim to finance the increasing investment needs of the future.</p> <p>The Freeport has become a major gateway between Asia and Africa.</p> <p>The island is expected to continue its development into a regional centre for tourism and finance.</p>
Exports	UK 34%, France 20%, USA 13%, Germany 6%.
Imports	South Africa 12%, France 11%, India 9%, UK 6.5%, Germany 4.7%



Tuesday & Thursday
Full Day

The Dodo's Trail

Port Louis • Central Market • Caudan Waterfront • Creole Lunch • Moka • Long Mountain • Pamplemousses Gardens



A tour showing you the full kaleidoscope of the Mauritian life and culture. Start with a visit of the capital, **Port Louis**. The view from the old citadel **Fort Adelaide** over the town and its harbour is magnificent. After that you will discover the busy city centre including the noisy and hectic **central market** with its shouting merchants, its intriguing array of all kinds of aromas and the colourful displays of large varieties of tropical fruits and vegetables. Only a short walk away is the **Caudan Waterfront**, a modern and elegant shopping centre, where you will find the **Blue Penny Museum**, home to one of the rarest and most valuable stamps in the world, the 'Blue Penny'.

Discover all the delicacies of Creole food with a delicious and authentic Mauritian lunch.

Then the route leads around **Moka** and the **Pieter Both** mountain and descends down the Long Mountain Road through the most scenic countryside towards Ville Bague and the plains of **Pamplemousses**.

There you will explore the magnificent Botanical Garden - world renowned for the variety as well as the rarity of its species. A leisurely walk along the shady, well-kept avenues is a real treat for body and soul.



Wednesday & Friday
Full Day

Wild SouthWest

West Coast • Chamarel • Waterfall and 7-Coloured Earth • Domaine St. Denis • Black River Gorges • Trou aux Cerfs • Domaine Les Pailles



The scenic drive along the west coast via **Tamarin Bay** and the **salt pans** leads into the south west corner of Mauritius.

In 'Case Noyal' you can taste the local '**Café Chamarel**' roasted on the spot at the traditional coffee factory.

Enjoy amazing views as the road climbs towards '**Chamarel**' village.

The 90 m high **Chamarel waterfall** and the 7-coloured earth are two authentic sites not to be missed.

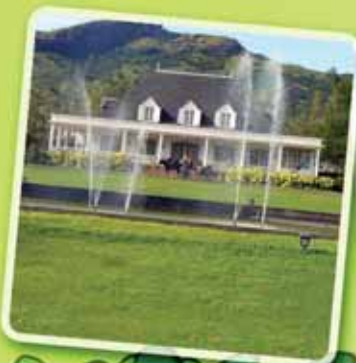
A delicious gourmet lunch will then be served at **Domaine Saint Denis**, a private estate with spectacular mountain and coastal views.

One km further is the viewpoint over **Black River Gorges** which are home to most of the island's endemic flora and fauna.

Through the forest of **Plaine Champagne** you will travel towards Curepipe.

From the rim of the volcanic crater **Trou aux Cerfs**, the panoramic view extends over nearly the whole island.

After a stop at the interesting **Glass Gallery** in Phoenix the tour ends at **Eureka** one of the oldest colonial mansions remaining on the island. Situated in a beautiful park, the house features 109 doors and a variety of valuable antiques are on display. After 'High Tea' on the veranda you will return to your hotel.



The Deep South

Grand Bassin • Tea Plantation & Factory • Saint Aubin • Andrea Lodge • La Vanille Réserve des Mascareignes



Visit the enchanting and mostly undeveloped south coast. The drive first leads up to the high plateau towards the sacred lake **Grand Bassin**, the most important place of worship of the Mauritian Hindus.

Continue off the beaten track towards **Bois Chéri**, a village surrounded by tea plantations. The Bois Chéri **tea factory** also houses an interesting tea museum. In the charming 'chalet' with its wonderful views over the south, the various flavours and aromas of the local tea can be tasted.

Feel the idyllic and peaceful life of times gone by in the South. Enjoy the walk through the magnificent garden surrounding the colonial house of the **Saint Aubin Sugar Estate** as well as the adjoining anthurium plantation. Discover the secrets of vanilla and learn about its cultivation.

A typical Mauritian lunch is served at the **Andrea Lodge** situated on a high cliff of sheer basalt rock. Here, the Indian Ocean is untamed and provides a stunning display of the power of nature. It is fascinating to watch the powerful waves pounding relentlessly against the black rock. After lunch, take a walk to a nearby deer park.

The final highlight is a visit of the **La Vanille Réserve** des Mascareignes (a nature reserve). This lush tropical valley is home to a large number of regional flora and fauna including the giant tortoises and a breeding place for hundreds of crocodiles.



Saturday
Full Day

Coconut Island

"There is no better way to spend a day..."



This small private dream island, **Ile des Deux Cocos**, rises only a few feet out of the clearest water in the Blue Bay Marine National Park in the south east part of Mauritius.

It is the perfect backdrop for the ultimate luxurious experience in the tropics. Fringed by clean white sandy beaches and the calm turquoise waters of the marine park, the island is an invitation for visitors to indulge and enjoy this very special setting, as well as the highest standards in comfort and service provided by courteous and friendly staff.

The fabulous variety of the underwater life can be explored during snorkelling sessions or a trip on a glass bottom boat into the centre of the marine park.

The lunch buffet is a mix of salads, grilled meat and fish as well as delicious desserts - accompanied by the sound of guitars. Beer, wine and soft drinks are included without limit and so is the traditional farewell rum cocktail.

In the afternoon, the pearl-white beaches and turquoise waters of the lagoon invite you to drift off into the gentle island way of life under a palm tree.



Monday
Full Day

Mahebourg & Le Domaine

Mahebourg • Grand Port • East Coast • Le Domaine d'Anse Joncée



The Dutch first landed at Grand Port in the 1700's, starting the colonisation of Mauritius. The French constructed the first harbour at **Mahebourg**. In 1810, this place saw the sole naval victory of Napoleon's armies over the English.

The **Naval Museum** at the entrance of Mahebourg houses a variety of relics relating the historic battle of Grand Port and its glorious past.

After an enriching walk through the museum, drive to the **Mahebourg Waterfront** and enjoy a short stroll to the



bazaar, the village market, where tropical fruit stalls, local spices, fresh vegetables and a variety of clothes blend together beautifully to create a typical Mauritian ambiance.

It is the right time to test your bargaining skills and bring back memorable souvenirs. Leave Mahebourg and drive to **Falaise Rouge** for refreshments while enjoying the amazing views over the islands of the East coast.

You will then drive along through the small coastal villages to **Le Domaine d'Anse Joncée**, a private hunting reserve spreading over 1,000 hectares and breeding



ground of the endemic bird of prey: the Mauritian Kestrel. The multitude of flora and fauna at the Domaine makes it a paradise for nature-lovers and trekkers.

Transfer by 4x4 to the rustic restaurant, situated nearly 600m above sea level and offering a spectacular view over the bay of Mahebourg, for a typical Mauritian lunch followed by a rum tasting session.

This journey finally ends with a walk down through the Domaine to the observation post, where you can enjoy the panoramic views over Ile de la Passe, Ile aux Phare and Ile Marianne.



Wednesday

Domaine de l'Etoile - Nature Reserve

Full Day



L'Etoile means 'the star' and that is exactly what it is: over five thousand acres of the finest nature reserve inside the mountains of the East coast. Only recently opened to a limited number of visitors, the best way to explore this magnificent estate is on quad bikes. The guided trip lasts for about 3 hours and is an incredible and unique experience.

Magnificent viewpoints over Mauritius, stunning landscapes, deer reserves, rare endemic birds, plantations of coffee and vanilla, historical sights and many other highlights make this outing a day to remember.

A delicious local lunch will be served in the rustic yet elegant lodge overlooking the serene **Grande Rivière Sud Est**.

After lunch one can explore the **archery circuit** (optional) and try one's luck at a range of 3-D targets or spend the afternoon relaxing in the comfort of the lodge.



Saturday
Half Day

Unique Nature Reserves



At Pointe Jerome, in the Southeast, a ferry brings you to **Ile Aux Aigrettes**, a nature reserve under the management of the Mauritius Wildlife Foundation.

There you will discover the island's original coastal forest where the Dodo and many other species unique to Mauritius were roaming hundreds of years ago. Giant tortoises, Telfair Skinks and the more famous Pink Pigeon live freely on the island.

Viewpoints provide breathtaking sceneries over the bay and the mountain ranges. A guided walk lasts about 90 minutes.

A few minutes away there is the **Marine National Park of Blue Bay**. Board a glass bottom boat and discover the splendid underwater life with its multitude of well-preserved corals and colourful fish. With luck, you might even see a graceful turtle passing under the boat.

Part of the revenue from this tour goes to the MWF for the restoration programme of Ile aux Aigrettes



Saturday
Half Day

The North

L'Aventure du Sucre (The Sugar Museum) • Cap Malheureux • Grand Bay



This new, private museum in a converted old sugar factory is a marvel in its own right. It superbly displays the origins of the landscapes, the people and the history of the most important industry which has sustained the island for centuries: **SUGAR**. It explains also the vital socio-economic impact as well as the complex technological aspects of sugar production.

See, feel and sense the sounds, fragrances, colours and images of this remarkable island and its people.

After a few minutes drive you arrive at **Cap Malheureux** for a scenic view. A short stop at the famous red-roofed chapel with a wonderful panorama of **Gunner's Quoin (Coin de Mire)**, a majestic rock rising out of the turquoise sea. **Grand Bay** is our lively and most popular seaside resort. You will have time to explore and browse in the fashionable boutiques at Sunset Boulevard.



Thursday & Saturday
Half Day

Shopping

Mauritius is well-known for its excellent shopping. The abundance and diversity of shopping opportunities is a real pleasure. At **Floreal** and **Curepipe** you can wander through the arcades and various shopping centres. The most interesting buys are **duty free diamonds, jewellery and watches** from Adamas or Cledor. Many other articles can be found such as fantastic **historic ship models**, luxurious textiles (**cotton, silk, cashmere**) and all kinds of handicrafts.

Please take photocopies of your tickets and passports for duty free articles. All duty free articles will be delivered at the counter of the Chamber of Commerce at the airport for your departure flight.



Wednesday
Full Day

The Dolphin Cruise

** The operations of cruises is subject to weather conditions and the change of itineraries remains at the skipper's discretion. (Please consult the cancellation policy).*

Enjoy a morning tea or coffee at the jetty in Black River before boarding the luxury **O'Plezir**. The experienced and friendly crew will help you get comfortable on board.

After a short safety talk, the sail is hoisted and the course is set northwards along the magnificent coastline boasting the highest mountains of Mauritius.

The chance to see dolphins is really very good but obviously there is no guarantee. Your guides and the crew will be eager to answer any questions on **Spinner Dolphins** and their habits.

Cruises are conducted along the internationally applicable guidelines for dolphin watching so as not to disturb the animals too much. (bring binoculars, if you have a pair!).

The cruise then continues further North along the changing coastline. The boat anchors close to the coral reef where you can **swim and snorkel** and enjoy the superb underwater life.

Meanwhile, the crew will prepare a delicious BBQ which is served with a variety of salads. Around 16.00 O'Plezir docks at the jetty after a memorable day cruising.



Monday & Saturday

The Sunset Cruise

The Mauritian west coast produces some of the most spectacular sunsets.

What a pleasure to sit on board a luxury yacht with a refreshing drink and watch the sun go over the famous yardarm.

Our cruise lasts for about 2 hours .

Magic Sails - Exclusive Catamaran Cruises

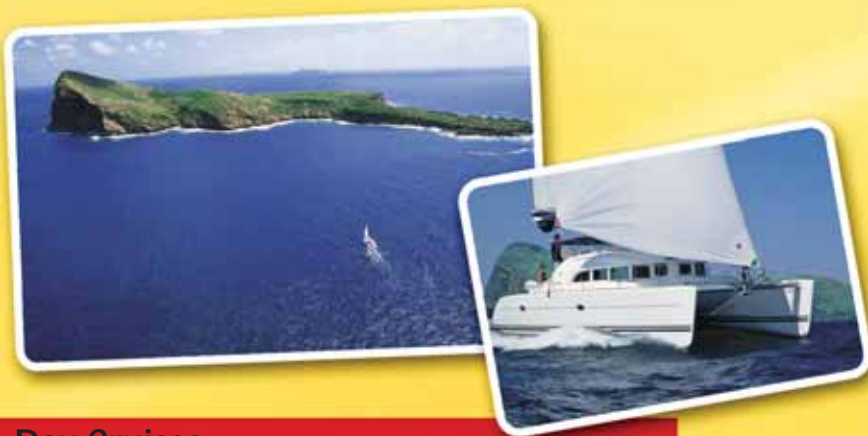
** The operations of cruises is subject to weather conditions and the change of itineraries remains at the skipper's discretion. (Please consult the cancellation policy).*

Private Charters

Magic Sails operates a fleet of **luxurious catamarans** in the northern part of Mauritius which are available for **private charters** of up to 8 persons. Enjoy the pleasure of having the exclusivity of your own yacht and let yourself be spoilt by the well-trained crew.

Relax in comfort while sailing the clear tropical waters of the North. Venture as far as the **outlying islands** or enjoy the excellent snorkelling opportunities near the **Gunner's Quoin**, the choice is yours.

A sumptuous lobster lunch is served on board by the crew in a calm anchorage. In the late afternoon you will return to the mainland after an idyllic and unforgettable day at sea.



Day Cruises

Join one of our catamarans which set out on daily cruises to the islands in the North.

We take only up to 10 guests on each boat to ensure the highest standard of comfort. Cruise past the majestic **Gunner's Quoin** before anchoring in the crystal clear lagoon at **Ilot Gabriel** where swimming and snorkelling are excellent. Lunch will be a seafood BBQ on board, skilfully prepared by the crew members. Enjoy the sun and relax as the catamaran leisurely sails back in the late afternoon breeze.



Tuesday & Friday

Full Day

Tropical Cruise - Ile aux Cerfs

** The operations of cruises is subject to weather conditions and the change of itineraries remains at the skipper's discretion. (Please consult the cancellation policy).*



Sail around the small island in front of **Trou d'Eau Douce**. A side trip on a small ferry boat will make you discover the **Waterfalls of Grande Rivière Sud Est**.

On your way to **Ile aux Cerfs**, there are excellent possibilities to swim and snorkel in the crystal clear waters of the protected lagoon.

A BBQ-lunch will be served on the catamaran.
Spend your afternoon at leisure on the famous Ile aux Cerfs.



Monday & Thursday

Turquoise Cruise - Ile aux Cerfs

Departure from Pointe Jerome (South East).

Sunday
Full Day

Sailing Dreams - Northern Islands

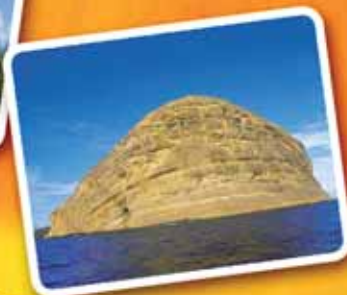
** The operations of cruises is subject to weather conditions and the change of itineraries remains at the skipper's discretion. (Please consult the cancellation policy).*



Cruise all morning on a catamaran to the islands in the North, sailing past the majestic rock **Gunner's Quoin**. After sailing, the boat anchors near the magnificent sandy beach of **Ilot Gabriel**.

The waters are crystal clear with ideal conditions for swimming and snorkelling. The crew will prepare a delicious BBQ on board the catamaran. Sail back to **Grand Bay** in the early afternoon.

You have the choice between the 40-foot catamaran **Le Pacha**, or the 60-foot former racing catamaran **Harris Wilson**.

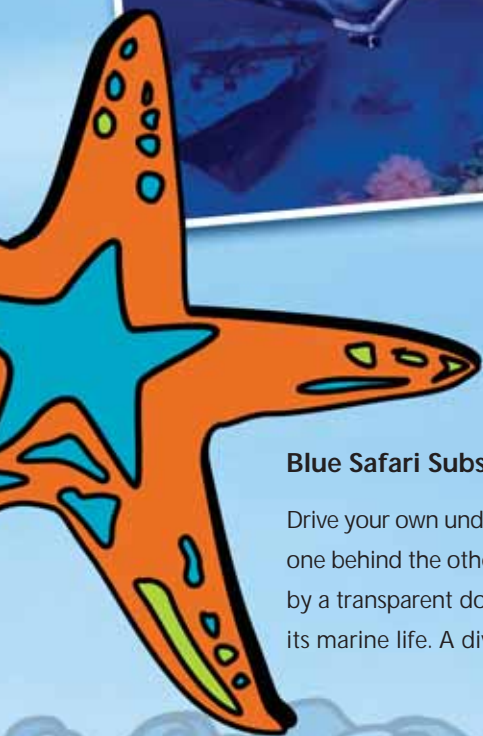




Blue Safari Submarine:

Dive up to 35m into the Indian Ocean and enjoy a rare and unforgettable experience in total security and comfort.

The pilots are trained in marine biology and will guide you during the 40-minute dive. Viewing the wreck of the 'Star Hope' and its numerous inhabitants is a magical moment.



Blue Safari Subscooter:

Drive your own underwater scooter in 3m depth. Riders sit comfortably one behind the other and breathe normally as their heads are covered by a transparent dome providing a panoramic view over the reef and its marine life. A dive lasts 30 minutes.



Daily
Full Day

Mauritius a la Car

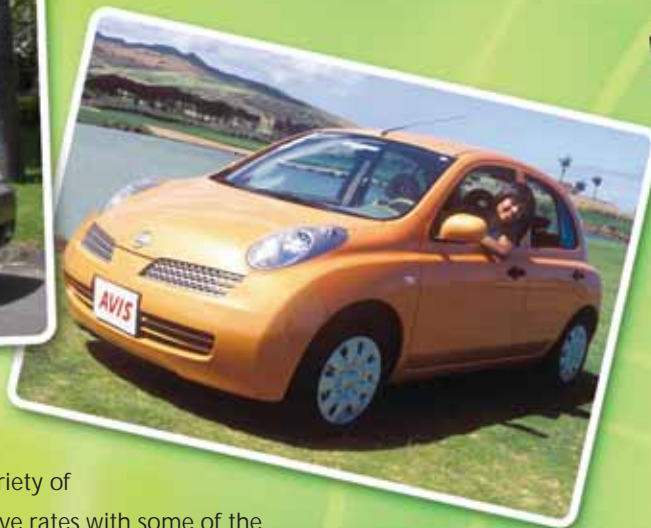


Hire one of our comfortable cars chauffeured by an experienced guide for a day and see Mauritius in your own independent way. Design your own itinerary with your guide and see the places that you would like to discover.

The trip will last around 8 hours which is ample time to see a good part of Mauritius. The excursion is available for 3 adults or two adults and two children. Your guide will advise you where to find the best local cuisine for lunch. You will reach your hotel again by late afternoon.

Not included: lunch, beverages or entrance fees





CAR RENTAL

Discover the island on your own in a rented car. A variety of models is available in all price ranges. Very competitive rates with some of the reputed companies are available. Careful: driving is on the left side!



HELICOPTER FLIPS

See the incredible colour palette of the ocean, gleaming white beaches, a green carpet of sugar cane, rugged mountains and gorges. Discover the wilderness and scenic attractions often inaccessible by vehicle, boat or foot



OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Mountain climbing, hiking, abseiling, mountain-biking, sea-kayaking...

There are a number of outdoor activities available for small parties and your representative will gladly make the arrangements and bookings for you.



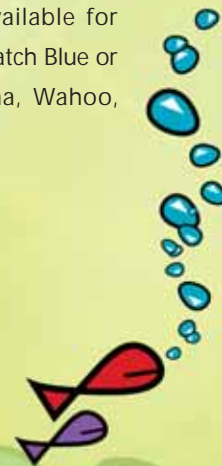
BIG GAME FISHING

Mauritius offers the best for the sports-fishermen and holds several world records. Excellently equipped boats with experienced crews are available for charters (half or full day). Catch Blue or Black Marlin, Sharks, Tuna, Wahoo, Sailfish, Dorado, etc.



UNDERSEA WALK

Take a walk in the unique underwater world in 3-4 m depth at Trou aux Biches or Grand Bay in the North or at Belle Mare on the East coast. Spend 30 minutes in an amazing coral garden with hundreds of colourful fish. Anyone can do it!



Practical Information - from A-Z

- Shopping** There are excellent shopping centers throughout the island. T-shirts, shirts, beach & swimwear, cashmere pullovers, sweaters, leather goods, handicraft, ship models and jewellery are amongst the many items on sale.
Numerous **Duty Free Shops** offer a large variety of jewellery, diamonds and watches (copies of passport and air tickets are required).
- Sun** Use sun care products with high protection factors even when the sky is clouded. It is advisable to wear a hat and sunglasses during the entire day, as the sun is fierce at any time. Wear a T-shirt when snorkelling.
- Taxi** Available at all hotels or at special taxi stations throughout the island.
- Telephone** Direct dialling from the hotel room is possible in all major hotels.
Country code: **U. K. :** 020 44 **France :** 020 33
 Germany : 020 49 **Austria :** 020 43
Then dial the area code and the number.
The IDD access code for Mauritius is +230. There are no area codes on the island.
Hotel phones are expensive: approximately Rs. 200 per minute.
- Telephone Cards** Available in many shops everywhere (Rs. 50, 100 & 200).
- Time Difference** Mauritian Time is 4 hours ahead of GMT.
UK Time is 4 hours behind in Winter and 3 hours in Summer.
Central Europe: 3 hours behind in Winter and 2 hours in Summer.
South Africa: 2 hours behind.
- Tipping** In restaurants, tipping is not compulsory and remains an appreciation of good service (5 - 10%).
- Valuables** It is highly recommended to deposit any valuables and money in the hotel safe.
- Water** Tap water is drinkable but we still recommend drinking bottled water.

Above info may change without notice and we are not liable for its correctness. (February 08)

CANCELLATION POLICY

The following rules and regulations apply for the cancellation of excursions:

- **No show** - confirmed clients do not show up for departure: 100 % cancellation fee
- Cancellation on the day of departure: 100% cancellation fee
- Cancellation the day before departure: 75% cancellation fee
- Weather conditions not suitable to clients: 100 % cancellation fee
- Bad weather – cancellation by Connections before departure: Full refund
- Bad weather – cancellation during excursion: Partial refund