

Diving the Dream Islands

of the Seychelles Archipelago

by Glynn Burrige

Photos © Imran Ahmad

Two divers slice the pristine, crystal waters off the north-west coast of Mahé, principal island of the jewel of the Indian Ocean: the stunningly beautiful Seychelles Archipelago.

What they are seeking lies some 40 metres beneath the ocean - the hull of an old fishing trawler, deliberately scuppered to provide a diving site in what is arguably one of the best kept secrets among the international diving fraternity: the amazing Seychelles diving experience.

One diver is Imran Ahmad, Singapore-based renowned Nikon professional photographer and educator and he is amazed by the world class diving he has found around these islands long celebrated for their world-beating beaches, warm, dappled, sapphire waters and the final word in laid-back island lifestyle but with all the trimmings.

'At 40 metres she is fully intact and teeming with marine life and coral growth', he enthuses, 'and with visibility for as far as the eye can see, this is a definite 'must' dive for wreck lovers.

Imran is one of an increasing number of divers all making the same discovery - the magnificent Seychelles Islands. Secluded from the world since the dawn of time, Seychelles is only now awakening to its true potential as a dream tourism destination and much of what you will find here is still wonderfully untouched, thanks to Seychelles' strong conservation laws.

With 115 granite and coral islands and an exclusive economic zone of 1 million square miles, this cyclone-free cluster of island gems offers year-round diving in a land of perpetual summer. Together, the islands offer awesome diversity for diving aficionado and novice alike on both granite and coral reefs which can

be nothing less than living aquariums for diverse and spectacular forms of coral and marine life. Myriad, dazzling coral reef fish, shark, moray eels, turtles, lobster, giant rays and even the odd migrating whale shark propose a kaleidoscope of diving entertainment in a host of unspoiled venues. On one dive alone, near Aride, 800 species of marine life were spotted!

Seychelles boasts a number of world-recognised dive sites, such as the famous Ennerdale Wreck and Brissare rocks as well as the lesser known, more remote but even more spectacular sites around Marianne, the Sisters, Aride, Trompeuse and several other islands. Some of the more remote locations are only accessible by live-aboard charter dive boats.

Diving in Seychelles is refreshingly unprocessed as well, with un-crowded dive boats and unhurried dive schedules, in keeping with the leisurely pace of life. Local dive centres and a range of live-aboards will provide access to great diving while offering a taste of the unique Seychellois lifestyle with beach BBQ's and other island-style entertainment. All diver training is conducted by internationally qualified instructors, most of whom are members of PADI, the Professional Association of Diving Instructors, the world's largest sport diver training organisation.

Now, more than ever, is the time to visit Seychelles and discover just how extraordinary - and affordable! - diving can be in one of the very last natural aquariums on our planet where pristine waters, leisurely diving schedules and an astonishing variety of marine life all conspire to offer one of the finest dive vacations on the planet. 🌊

For more information about diving in Seychelles, please visit: www.seychelles.travel and www.subios.com.

