

Seychelles Creole Festival

You can hear it in the music,
You can feel it in the rhythm,
You can taste it in the food.



For two centuries Seychelles has been a melting pot of different races, traditions and religions. Fusing ethnic diversity into a colorful, trilingual Creole nation. The predominant Roman Catholic Church exists happily alongside other creeds, reflecting the religious and racial harmony that is the mainstay of this peaceful yet vibrant nation.

The creole festival is, at it's core, a manifestation of Seychellois and Creole identity and a celebration of culture of the island as experienced through music, dance, arts, craft, cuisine, customs and the general way of life.

It offers the visitors a fascinating week full of the colors sound flavors and fragrances of one corner of the creole world that treasures its traditions while embracing the opportunities of the present. Seychelles is a prominent pioneer in the promotion of the Creole language and culture, proud of its pivotal role in hosting the twenty second Creole Festival this October, 26th to 31st October 2007.

The festival is an event attracting an increasing international audience coming to appreciate the festival's highlights that includes Fashion Show, Sware Kreativite, Dimans Kreol Bor Lanmer {Sunday on the beach} at Beau-Vallon, music performance....

Celebrated on all the main islands of Mahe, Praslin and La Digue from 26th to 31th October 2007, the Kreol Festival is the main cultural event of the year in Seychelles that gives the visitors the opportunity to experience the different aspects of the Creole culture.

History

Summary of the main events in Seychelles history.

- Arab seafarers visited the islands as early as the ninth century.
- The Phoenicians of old, as well as the Polynesians en route to Madagascar may well have called on the islands
- Portuguese navigator Juan de Nova made the first recorded landing in the Seychelles in 1501.
- Vasco da Gama sighted the Amirantes Island Group en route to India in 1502
- On early Portuguese maps – Seychelles appeared as the *Sete Irmãs* or Seven Sisters
- In 1609 came the first Squadron from the English East India Company under the command of captain Alexander Sharpeigh
- The Islands were a pirate hide-out during the 16th and 17th centuries
- A French settlement was finally established in 1770 with 15 *whites*, 5 *Maladar Indians*, and *eight Africans*.
- The island remained in French hands until the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo and Seychelles population had reached 3500 by the time Seychelles was ceded to Britain under the treaty of Paris in 1814
- During this period Seychelles came to know the enlightened policies of administrators such as Pierre Poivre, the dastardly schemes of rogues such as Brayer du Barre, the brilliant politicking of Governor Queau de Quincy and the terrible repercussions of the French Revolution.
- Under the British, Seychelles slumbered for the next 161 years as a backwater colony achieving a population of some 7000 by the year 1825
- Important estates were established during British rule featuring coconut, food-crops, cotton and sugar cane
- During this period Seychelles saw the establishment of Victoria as her capital, the exile of numerous and colourful troublemakers from the Empire, the devastation caused by the famous avalanche of 1862 and the economic repercussions of the abolition of slavery.
- In 1976 Seychelles became a republic within the commonwealth and in 1977 President France Albert René achieved power.

Location - Geography

- Indian Ocean, 1600 kms off the east coast of Africa
- Between 4-10° South of the Equator
- 115 tropical islands spread over an area of 1,300,000 km²
- 42 granitic islands, some rising nearly 1000m out of the sea. 73 coralline islands which are sand cays and atolls, low and flat and rising between 6 and 13 metres above the high water mark

The Inner Islands are largely granitic and situated on the Seychelles plateau. **Mahé**, **Praslin** and **La Digue** and their neighbouring islands are the most frequented, offering the widest range of accommodation facilities. **Frégate**, **Bird** and **Denis Island**, a little more isolated, also fall within the Inner Islands.

The Outer Islands, located beyond the Seychelles plateau, consist of mainly low lying sand cays and coral atolls. Within this group only two islands were inhabited, **Desroches** and **Alphonse**.

The Outer Islands fall into five distinct groups:

The Amirantes Group

The Southern Coral Group

The Alphonse Group

The Farquhar Group

The Aldabra Group



Language

- Today there are three official national languages of Seychelles **Creole**, **French** and **English** although many Seychellois also speak fluent Italian or German.
- Creole Language is an adaptation of 17th Century French with other words and expressions coming from Africa and Madagascar.
- Creole is today a written language as well as spoken and has earned the same respect that English and French have.
- Such freedom has resulted in an outburst of creativity in plays, poetry and prose

For more information on the Creole language please contact the Ministry of Culture

People

- The Seychellois are a colorful blend of races all of whom have brought something of their own customs and cultures to the islands
- Harmonious blend of different nationalities giving social stability
- Predominantly descendents of African, European, Chinese, Indian settlers
- Seychellois are generally friendly but shy
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Religion

- There are three main religions in Seychelles; Christianity (Catholics and Anglicans, Seventh Day Adventist,) Hinduism, Islam
- French Catholicism has proved to be the most influential and even survived British rule. Mass and other parish feasts are colorful occasions for Seychellois to dress up in their Sunday best and socialize

Population

- The population of Seychelles stands at just over 80,000 people, two-thirds of whom live on Mahé and in particular around the capital, Victoria.

Legends and Story-Telling

- Stories of ghosts and strange apparitions abound in Seychelles and people generally tend to be superstitious
- Many tales are linked to buried treasure: harking back to a time when pirates used the islands as a hideaway
- The oral tradition is very strong as television and radio have only recently replaced story telling as a form of entertainment on the islands
- Some examples of popular stories surround a mythical character call “Soungula” and his exploits

For more information on legends please contact the Creole Institute.



Music and Dance

- There are several traditional dance forms in Seychelles
- Hotel entertainment often includes displays of these dance forms
- The **sega** is a tantalizing hip swaying regional dance accompanied by guitars, drums and even synthesizers.
- The **moutia** is a traditional dance accompanied by large flat drums made from goatskin and tuned over a fire prior to being played. The dance was banned by the old colonial authorities as being too Sexually brazen.
- It is the moutia that is most closely associated with the African
- heritage of the Seychellois people
- Other African looking instruments also make up the musical heritage of the Seychellois sound: the one stringed zez from Madagascar, the **bonm** and the **kaskavel**
- **Contre Dance** is another imported dance originating at the French court
- **Kanmtole** is a reminiscent of a barn dance/Scottish country reel. This is played to a fiddle, triangle and banjo with a 'komander' calling the moves



Arts and Crafts

- Seychelles' artists exercise their skills across a broad spectrum and their works include everything from the small memorabilia you would expect to find in a tourism-driven economy through to magnificent collectors items. The products include
 - Books
 - Paintings
 - Stained glass
 - Coconut shell
 - Husk products
 - Works featuring seashells, coral and clothing
 - Forms of jewellery-pearl, wood gold and silver
 - Products such as bags, baskets, napkin rings, candle holders all made from recycled materials, coconut palms, fibres, bamboo, metal and pottery
 - Vanilla and coconut oil/scents
 - A tour around the principal islands will allow the visitor to savour the richness of artistic expression on display in many charming galleries and out-of-the-way studios

Creole Cuisine

- The origins of the racial mix of the Seychellois people are reflected in their cooking from
- India comes many varieties of curry
- China comes popular rice dishes and stir-fried vegetables and noodles with steamed fish\France the aromatic blends of garlic and herbs
- Local delicacies include traditional dishes such as:
 - **Kari zourit** (a creamy octopus curry)
 - **Tec Tec soup** (a small white shellfish collected from the beaches and made into a soup usually with pumpkin)
 - **Poisson sale** (salted dried fish)
 - **Bouillon brede** (spinach soup)
 - A variety of **chutneys** (side dishes made by local fruit, fish and vegetables)
 - **Poisson grillé** (grilled fish marinated in garlic, ginger, onions and chillies)

Architecture

- Creole architecture is an important cultural aspect of Seychelles
- The designs of some of the grand old houses with their steep roofs are representative of an architecture adapted for comfortable living in the tropics
- Houses have many openings to catch the island breezes
- Modern architecture attempts to assimilate traditional styles

Opening Ceremony

Each year, National committee responsible for the organization of the festival Creole designates a district for the opening ceremony.

The idea is to decentralise the Festival and to bring it closer to the people on our three main islands: Mahé, Praslin, La Digue. Some districts continually express the wish of hosting the event. An organizing committee is set up in the chosen district. The content of the ceremony varies depending on the space available, and the other characteristics. The ceremony starts at 6p.m and is divided in two parts: the official ceremony – this is the first part of the opening of the Festival with ceremonies and official speeches. The street party: this is when the Festival really start with a variety of activities: shows, kreol disco, tasting of Kreol dishes, dances, dominoes, Kreol ambiance in homes etc, the party goes on till morning.

Young Artist

A painting competition opened to all youths between four and twenty one year old. It is a regional and International Competition opened to all young Kreolophones around the world. The main objective of the activity is to develop the sense of sensibility and creativity in young people while at the same time giving them the opportunity to appreciate the values and richness of the Kreol culture. The paintings should reflect the beauty and spontaneity of the Kreol language. An exhibition of the submitted paintings is organizing at the National Cultural Centre during the Festival.

Quiz

The kreol Festival also process a series of academic activities. The quiz is one of those activities. The quiz is opened to all school children. The main objective of the activity is to educate on rich values of the Kreol language. The competition offers the children the occasion to discover, understand and appreciate their culture. It takes place in two different stages:

1. The heats
2. The Finals

Public Speaking

The competition is opened to all young Seychellois aged between fifteen and thirty, including District Youth Club members. To participate, participant must form teams of four, and choose a theme for their speech. The aim of the competition is to give young people the opportunity to carry out research in Kreol and on the Kreol language. The competition also permits them to master, and discover the beauty of our language.

‘Dimans Kreol bor Lanmer’

Dimans Kreol bor Lanmer takes place in a tombola atmosphere on the seaside and in the sea between the shore and the reef. This activity attracts a large crowd between 10a.m and 6p.m the programme consists of the Kreol music, traditional games, water sports, pirogue and raft race, coconut tree climbing competition etc. During the day, one can appreciate and buy Kreol product and taste typical kreol dishes and drinks.

‘Lakadans’

Lakadans, one of the greatest musical shows of the Kreol Festival, is an annual rendezvous featuring the best known from Seychelles and the countries in the region who never fail to satisfy the large and enthusiastic crowd who has turned the event into its own traditional rendezvous ends well past midnight, offers a night of sega with a touch of mouyta-mouge and moutya-maloge.



‘Konferans Lengwistik’

Once a year, during the Kreol Festival writers and linguists meet at Lenstiti Kreol and reflect on the role, place and development of the Kreol as a language used by eighteen million readers and writers in the world. Each year, the Komite Lalang kreol chooses a theme for the Kolok. After the discussions, recommendations are made concerning the Kreol language.

‘Animasyon dan lavil’

Musicians, singers, actors, story tellers..... From the Seychelles and elsewhere offer live entertainment in certain parts of Victoria during the Festival. Street shows are staged between and 7p.m on week days, and 10a.m to 4p.m during weekends. They contribute greatly to the festive atmosphere, which reigns in Victoria during this period, entertaining locals and tourists alike. The artists propose a hundred percent Kreol repertoire.

‘Kreolisimo’

A musical show with the participation of singers and musicians from the School of Music and National College of the Arts. The show brings back old Seychellois melodies and songs. The artists perform solo, trios or groups, accompanied by instruments taught by the School of Music: the guitar, the violin, the drums, the tam-tam, the piano and the copper instruments. The show is completely different from the Lakadans, which takes place in the Stad Lanmizik in Victoria. Kreolisimo is the ideal occasion for the School of Music to pay tribute to Seychellois music stars and veterans.

‘Moman Kreativite’

It is an improvised of the Kreol Festival to attract youths in all its activities. Sware kreativite is a variety show featuring school children from all schools on Mahé, Praslin, La Digue and Silhouette. The show gives the young generation the opportunity to demonstrate their talents in different forms of arts. It is also an occasion to discover new artistic talents.

‘Fon lanmal’

Fon Lanmal is a fashion show which permits young Seychellois designers to present their latest creations. The clothes and accessories are often produced from local raw material. However, designers may import other materials of Kreol character. They can also fancy fashion in order to add more colour to the show. Whereas the young Seychellois designer’s participation is of a competitive nature, designers from other Indian Ocean countries who are invited to take part, do so solely for the show.

'BAL Asosye'

As its name suggests, the invited guests themselves contribute financially towards the hosting of this traditional dance. The dance starts at 8p.m and lasts until morning. A Kanmtole band provides and banana chips, moutia (a rice and sugar delicacy), chili cakes and black puddings accompanied by alcoholic drinks. At midnight, a soup is served to awaken sleepy dancers and to provide them with the necessary energy to dance till morning. In the early hours of the morning before the end of the ball, they have breakfast inclusive of tea, coffee, Creole cakes and paw paw jam. The musicians announce they day break and the host offers all the remaining drinks to the dancers. This moment is called 'larg dilo', and it is followed by the night's last dance, the Krayon, performed a la queue le-le.



PROGRAMME FESTIVAL CREOLE
24th - 31st October 2008

It offers the visitors a fascinating week full of the colours sound flavours and fragrances of one corner of the creole world that treasures its traditions while embracing the opportunities of the present. Seychelles is a prominent pioneer in the promotion of the Creole language and culture, proud of its pivotal role in hosting the twenty third Kreol Festival, celebrated on all the main islands of Mahe, Praslin and La Digue from 26th to 31st October 2008.

Saturday 18 th	
Activity:	“Dimans Dan Leo ” - (District activity)
Venue/Time:	Val D'en Dor Baie Lazare - 10:00 am
Friday 24 th	
Activity:	Opening ceremony “AR WI LONTAN” at Stad Popiler (Good old days) followed by Activities at the Victoria Waterfront area” and Carrefour des Arts
Venue/Time:	19.00 to 21.00pm
Saturday 25 th	
Activity:	Opening of “Bazar Artizanal” and “Vilaz Kreol” (Local Crafts)
Venue/Time:	SEnPA Garden and Freedom Square Car Park, Victoria - 9:30 am
Activity:	“Moman Kreativite” - (local & possible international talent show)
Venue/Time:	International Conference Centre of Seychelles, Victoria - 2:00 pm
Activity:	“Lanmes Kreol” - (Rhythmic Mass)
Venue/Time:	St Francis Church Baie Lazare - 4:00 pm
Activity:	Finals of the “kanmtole” competition - (traditional dances competition)
Venue/Time:	International Conference Centre of Seychelles, Victoria - 6:00 pm
Sunday 26 th	
Activity:	“Dimans Kreol Borlanmer” - (Beach party - Creole style)
Venue/Time:	Anse Royale and Beau Vallon - 10:00 am
Activity:	“Moman Kreativite” (+ invitees for prize giving for talent show)
Venue/Time:	International Conference Centre of Seychelles, Victoria - 2:00 pm
Activity:	Cine Sesel - (from young film makers)
Venue/Time:	Docklands Cinema, New Port - 7:00 pm
Monday 27 th	
Activity:	Finals of the Quiz competition
Venue/Time:	National Theatre, Mont Fleuri - 10:00 am
Activity:	“Konkour Diskour”

	Venue/Time:	National Theatre, Mont Fleuri - 2:00 pm
	Activity:	“BD Monde Creole” (exhibition)
	Venue/Time:	Alliance Francaise - 5:30 pm
Tuesday 28th		
International Kreol Day		
Special Welcome for all disembarking passengers at the Seychelles International Airport, Pointe Larue		
	Activity:	Opening ceremony of “Kолоk”
	Venue/Time:	Lenstiti Kreol, Au Cap 10:00 am
	Activity:	Opening ceremony of the “Zenn Artis Lemonn Kreolofonn” exhibition - (young artists local & international participants)
	Venue/Time:	International Conference Centre of Seychelles, Victoria - 2:00 pm
	Activity:	“Teat”
	Venue/Time:	National Theatre, Mont Fleuri or the International Conference Centre of Seychelles, Victoria - 7:00 pm
Wednesday 29th		
	Activity:	“Voyaz” (book launching)
	Venue/Time:	Eden Island - 7:00 pm
Thursday 30th		
	Activity:	“Fon Lanmal” - (fashion show)
	Venue/Time:	International Conference Centre of Seychelles, Victoria - 6:00 pm
Friday 31st		
	Activity:	“Vernissage Commerce de L’ocean Indien”
	Venue/Time:	Alliance Francaise - 5:30 pm
	Activity:	“Bal Asosye” – (Indian Ocean Commerce exhibition) All night traditional dancing
	Venue/Time:	Pointe Larue District Administration, Pointe Larue - 8:00 pm
	Activity:	“Lakadans” - (Singers & dancers)
	Venue/Time:	Music Village, Roche Caiman - 9:00 pm
Saturday 1st November		
	Activity:	“Moutya kot Kaz Kreol”
	Venue/Time:	Anse Royale - 7:00 pm