



## ALTERNATIVE INDIAN OCEAN

If clients have checked off the Indian Ocean's main isles, suggest these lesser-visited places of paradise, says **Alice Barnes-Brown**

**T**he topaz seas of the Indian Ocean will always allure. Surrounded by the world's warmest waters, established holiday hotspots such as the Maldives and Mauritius combine sunshine with calming coconut palms and opportunities to drift through the big blue. What lies beneath is just as appealing, with world-class snorkelling and diving for those curious about the underwater world.

The resorts in the region, from top-end private islands to family-friendly all-inclusives, are known for attracting repeat guests. But for those clients who want to try somewhere new, some

of the region's less-frequented islands are making strides in their efforts to increase tourism.

For example, Rodrigues – an island 350 miles east of Mauritius – is extending its airport runway, meaning flight capacity should double from 2027.

A raft of international hotels is opening on Zanzibar, including outposts of Le Méridien, Attitude Resorts and Egyptian hotel group Jaz, while a new Emirates flight linking Madagascar and the Seychelles offers a twin-centre with a twist.

If you're ready to sell somewhere different to second-time visitors – or even those who think they've seen it all – suggest these secret getaways.



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### MAURITIUS

Rainforest-covered mountains, spot-on sunsets and great rum – Mauritius has much to shout about. The small island offers a lot of diversity – the north has resorts set on white sand, the centre is home to national parks full of dramatic landscapes, while the south offers a more rugged sort of beach break. Daily direct Air Mauritius flights and a thrice-weekly BA link connect Gatwick to the island.

### RODRIGUES

A 90-minute flight away, Mauritius's smaller sister isle is becoming a contender for an Indian Ocean adventure thanks to refreshed hotel stock and ongoing airport expansion. In contrast with bustling country capital Port Louis, the island's main town of Port Mathurin consists of a few lively streets centred around a market.

As well as deserted atolls reachable by kayak, this volcanic island is known for its kitesurfing and calm coves, ideal for a few days' exploring. For adventures on land, suggest clients visit Caverne Patate, a cave system with routes almost 100m below sea level. Alternatively, they can bungee jump from a 300m-high suspension bridge or abseil from a sheer cliff.

Constance Tekoma is one of the best-known hotels on the island, offering intimate beach lodges where guests can lose themselves in the magic of east coast sunrises and Creole cuisine.

**Book it:** Africa and Indian Ocean specialist Love to Explore sells a 12-night trip to Mauritius and Rodrigues (with four nights at Constance Tekoma) from £3,450, including all flights, half-board accommodation and transfers. The price is based on a departure in September 2025. [lovetoexplore.com](http://lovetoexplore.com)

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## SEYCHELLES

A firm favourite among luxury lovers, the Seychelles has a distinct, otherworldly landscape, with smoothed granite rock formations emerging from powdery sands and shallow, bath-like seas. The archipelago features large inhabited islands and private islets, which means it provides an array of cultural and natural attractions, along with a heady dose of silence and seclusion.

## ZANZIBAR

East Africa's coast is often overlooked – but it shouldn't be. With easy flight connections via the Middle East from the UK, mile upon mile of beaches, plus resorts suiting a range of price points, the Zanzibar archipelago has all the ingredients for a revitalising Indian Ocean holiday.

The area's history adds extra flavour to a relaxing beach break. Capital Stone Town was a strategically important trading post, including for the slave trade, over centuries, and alleyways lined by whitewashed and crenellated buildings offer a unique fusion of African, European, Persian and Arabic architectural styles.

The city – which has been a Unesco World Heritage Site for the past 25 years – is an hour's drive from the Riu Palace Zanzibar (pictured), a popular all-inclusive adult-only resort on the northern tip of the main island. Three pools close to the sand provide space to sunbathe, but for something a little livelier, suggest paddle biking in the pristine Indian Ocean.

**Book it:** Tui offers seven nights' all-inclusive at the Riu Palace Zanzibar from £1,637 per person, based on two sharing a Junior Suite with Courtyard View and balcony or terrace. The price includes luggage, transfers and flights departing on April 21. [tui.co.uk](http://tui.co.uk)

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## SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka's beaches are as suited to surfing as to snorkelling and swimming, the highlands offer hiking and history in equal measure, and the island's size enables clients to pack it all into one trip. Spend time exploring Sigiriya fortress, tasting Ceylon tea on verdant plantations and spotting elephants and leopards in Yala National Park (pictured), before relaxing in a beach resort.

## MADAGASCAR

Activity-inclined clients will find even more to love in Madagascar, which combines adventure and culture to thrilling effect. After flying in to capital Antananarivo, the island is best explored on an escorted tour. Rainbow Tours' Madagascar Made Easy Deluxe itinerary combines wondrous wildlife with chill-out time on the Robinson Crusoe-like Anjajavy peninsula.

The tour spends the first few nights in the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park in Madagascar's rainforest-filled east. An expert guide will take clients on walks, with the chance of spotting lemurs, chameleons and more than 100 species of tree frog.

Clients then fly to the opposite side of the island to spend five nights at the all-inclusive Anjajavy le Lodge (pictured), a Relais & Châteaux property set in its own private reserve. Visitors could just spread out on the spellbinding beach or follow one of the nature trails from the lodge, but they can also take part in two free activities each day, from boules to windsurfing.

**Book it:** Rainbow Tours sells the 12-night itinerary from £7,425 per person, based on two sharing. The price includes all flights, ground transport, listed excursions and most meals, with departures from April to December. [rainbowtours.co.uk](http://rainbowtours.co.uk)

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