



V172 - April 2016 - *Easter in the Seychelles*

St. Sometimes

Diving Again

This was one of my best dive vacations ever. Eagle rays, reef sharks, beautiful corals, and dive sites with few, if any, other divers.

Flying Fox

The islands are full of fruit bats. I even ate fruit bat curry one night.

Insanity

Driving on the island was insane. Blue buses waited for Todd around every corner.

Americans

Very few of us venture to the Seychelles. Most that I met diving were living somewhere else in Africa already.



The Seychelles is an archipelago of 115 islands off the east coast of Africa, just north of Madagascar and southeast of the famous Maldives. As of 2013, according to the World Bank, their population is around 90,000. About 10k of those must be fruit bats.



(Left to Right) Greg, Todd, Heidi, Sarah, Ester, Jessie

The Trip

FIVE OF US

Todd, Sarah, Jessie, Heidi, and I signed on for a whimsical trip. Sarah was researching for warm sunny beaches and came up with Seychelles.

When she asked me “What about Seychelles?” I immediately said yes. I only knew they were islands close to the Maldives and thought DIVING!

THE FLIGHTS

Easy. Six hours to Dubai. Layover for three. Six hours to Seychelles. Direct.

HOUSE AND CAR?

We rented a three bedroom house in Mahé, on the southeastern side of the main island. €2500 split between five people for 12 days? Cheap. Car? Another €600. Affordable.

DRIVING AND DIVING?

I went to the nearest dive shop as soon as we landed. Well, Todd drove me. He ended up driving me up and over the mountain to the West side every morning.

LEFT SIDE SMALL ROADS

Driving in the Seychelles is not easy. I couldn’t have done it. It is a former British colony and they still drive on the

opposite side. Add small roads without guardrails, steep cliffs, blue public buses and ebony people walking on the roads and the result is Todd driving.

12 DAYS OF SUNSHINE?

Almost. We had a few bouts of torrential rain but those only lasted an hour or so. While I dove, the group went to the beaches.

OTHER ISLANDS?

Nope. We decided not to spend €65 per person, each way, to see another island. And that was just the public fairy. Imagine what a charter would have cost!

D

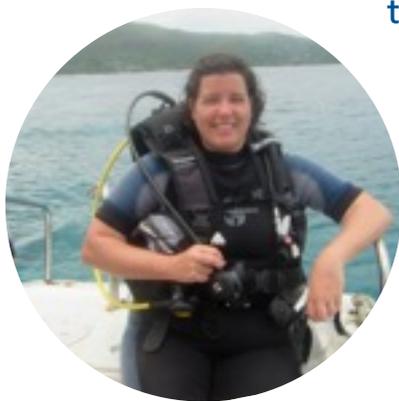
iving is a sport that everyone should at least try. Sarah, Todd, and even Heidi tried it out.

PAID has an official way to try out a dive. It's called DSD - Discover Scuba Diving. One tank, one dive, and a few short lessons about safety and skills. That's it. Robert, one of the local instructors, and I took these three for an hour dive. Heidi rented a

camera too.



Id duo affert aliquip eam vero nonu



Id duo affert aliquip eam vero

S

arah is most likely the only one to continue on. Todd felt confined by the equipment. Heidi enjoyed this one time, but prefers being on top of the water. Jessie prefers altitude over depth. I was just happy to have them try it out and maybe understand why I had Todd drive me across the island every morning.

Just keep breathing!





We made a nightly
trip to random
beaches for the
sunsets.

Grab a few drinks.
Get in the rental.
Find a random
beach.



**HOLY CRITTERS
BATMAN!**

A snail about this big was in Todd's drink one morning. Just look at the size of that!

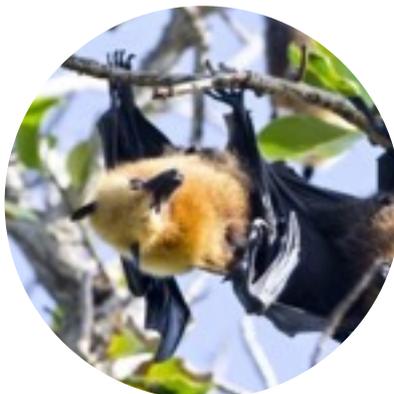
**LOOK AT ALL
THOSE
CRABS!**

These little speed demons were all over the beaches.



IN THE AIR!

Bats are everywhere.



ON THE PLATE!

Yes, I ate fruit bat curry one night for dinner.

I talked Todd, Heidi, and Sarah (that's her) to try scuba diving. They did a DSD dive. Sarah is the only one that will keep diving. But they all tried. That is what matters.





If the Southern Wind broke down, we would use the Southern Cross.

Diving Bliss

XTENDER 296

My dive watch is still alive. I've had it since 2005 but haven't dove with it for three years. This dive vacation just bumped the history up to 296 dives. Not bad for just two batteries in its lifetime.

PROCESS - PROCEDURE

Grendy, the local Dive Master that I always dove with, could really work the crowd. On day 2, he grabbed my camera to take a selfie of his lost front tooth. He lost it while trying to

make ascending bubbles during the safety stop. He later found it in his regulator. For the rest of the dives, he started his boat briefings asking if anyone was a dentist. What a character.

Overall, Grendy and the rest of the dive crew were funny, expedient, and very safe divers. They made the diving exciting.

RENTAL GEAR!

Yep. I had to rent gear every day. It was all ScubaPro so I was comfortable. The gear was well maintained and plentiful, even at a peak of two boats and 24 divers.

The dive shop is owned by Leo, a salty Dutch diver. We dove off the *Southern Cross* and the *Southern Wind*. The "Wind" is a 32ft split hull with twin 200 4-stroke Merc outboards. The "Cross" is the same length, but it had a very small entry platform between its twin 150 2-stroke Mercs. The *Southern Wind* allowed diver entry all around its hull and a side ladder.



Wetsuit? No way: Water was a balmy 32°C

Go South

MAHÉ, SEYCHELLES

I chose the closest dive shop to our house in the southern part of the island called Mahe. It turned out to be a blessing. Most people on the main island go North and dive with the other dive shops. The South has only one shop that caters to fun divers and

the Southern Wind and would hand pick who he wanted to take diving. Most of the time, he would take the larger groups of up to seven because I would follow the group as the caboose. He had me there for emergencies.

ALWAYS A SHARK

Yes, we would see at least one white tip on every first



tourists from the Four Seasons Resort. That means no divers, no fins, just the other divers from our boat. Groups were maxed out at about four. My dive master, Greindy, was the lead diver on

dive. The second dive would be a shallow 10m coral dive with turtles.

By far, the best dive site was “Stop Patch” - a 22m dive around two large submerged granite formations. The

aquatic life around the patch was amazing. Spotted eagle rays, nurse and white tips, and green or loggerhead turtles are all a given. There is a whale shark season, but it wasn’t during March of 2016.

B stands for Blue Bus! Just waiting! Curve after curve. Blue buses don't drive slow either. They are on a schedule and the drivers know these roads inch for inch. Watch out for walking tourists, locals, trash collectors, stray island dogs, no signals on the car ahead of you, and the impatient local driver behind you.



"Hello Todd". Beep beep. You have your lights on!

Crazy Driving

BLUE BUSES

The most harrowing aspect of the driving in Seychelles was definitely the Blue Monsters! The public buses zoom around the corners and take up both lanes sometimes. Imagine climbing a narrow mountain road with cliffs on one side and a mountain on the other. Then, as you are approaching an almost 160 degree turn, a large bus is coming right at you. So it was! Like Venezuela, sometimes you just have to throw it in reverse and give them the curve. Other times, you almost

lose a passenger side mirror! My hat goes off to Todd. What a great driver.

STEEP AND CURVING

The entire island is mountain or beach. There is little else. We drove the entire island during the twelve days of our



trip. There are three main roads that bisect the island from East to West, connecting the beachfront roads. Each of them starts at sea level, goes over the mountain, and ends back at sea level. Amazing!

TRENCHES AND WALKERS

There is no room for driving error. Risk oncoming buses and hug the middle line. If you stray off the passenger side, you might drop your tires into the two foot deep rain gullies lining the tar. Don't blink either. If you don't hit a wandering German, you will certainly hit an ebony local. There are no sidewalks. Many people cannot afford the bus.

scuba
Centre



Seychelles

Type to enter text

