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Tour Notes

Comoros Discovery

Tour Duration - 11 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●●○ | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●○○○ | Wildlife ●●●○○

Tour Pace - Relaxed

Tour Highlights

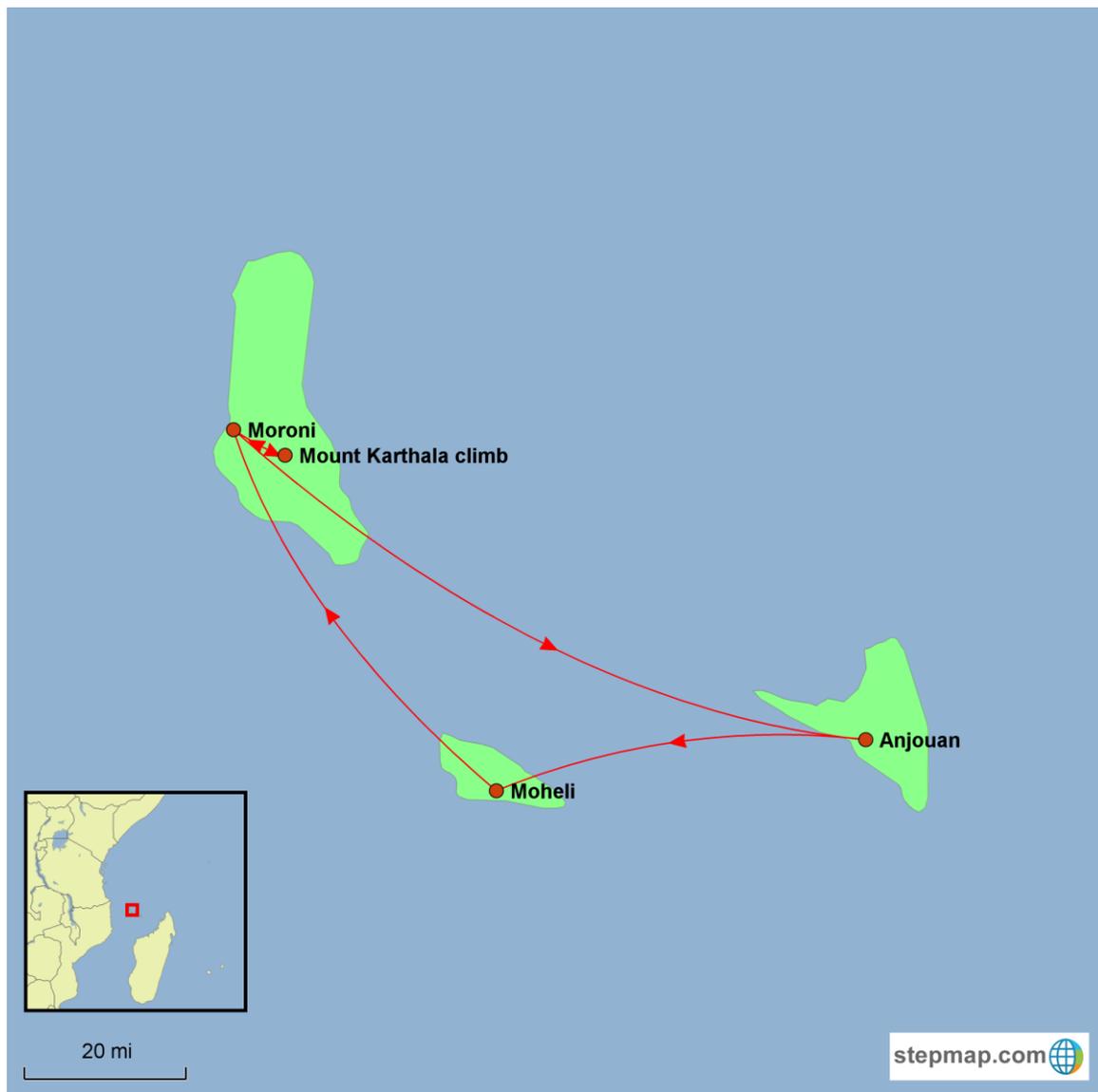
- ✓ Visit all three of the Comoros Islands; Grande Comore, Anjouan and Mohéli
- ✓ Climb Mount Karthala volcano
- ✓ Spot the Livingstone Fruit Bat - the largest bat in the world
- ✓ Search for whales and dolphins in Le parc marin de Mohéli





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Tour Map - The Comoros - Comoros Discovery Tour



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Comfortable hotels
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary.
Start Point: Moroni
End Point: Moroni
Transport: Private car and/or minibus, local flights
Countries: Comoros Islands - Grande Comore, Anjouan and Mohéli,



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Comoros Discovery

The Comoros lie moored in the Indian Ocean. The islands' people and culture are an intriguing fusion of African, Arab and Asian influences, overlaid by more recent French colonial rule. Though easily portrayed as a paradise, until recently tranquillity evaded the island nation. 20 coups or attempted coups have characterised the period since French rule ended in 1975. That said, the Comoros is a fascinating destination, juxtaposing engaging inhabitants, idyllic beaches and rich marine life with colonial hangovers, turbulent politics and adrenaline-pumping hikes to summit active volcanoes. Interested?

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip but on occasions it may be necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Arrival in Moroni

Arrive in Moroni, capital of the Comoros Islands. The rest of the day is at leisure to relax after your long flight or explore the town. Overnight Retaj Moroni Hotel* (formally known as the Le Moroni Hotel) or similar. (*please note that the Retaj Moroni Hotel does not serve alcohol)

Moroni

The sleepy capital Moroni is a delightful little town perched on the edge of the Indian Ocean and often surrounded by fishing boats in its harbour. The old quarter of the town is a maze of narrow streets that are fantastic to explore, and many buildings still have the traditional carved doors, reminiscent of those that can be found on Zanzibar. Moroni's main feature is its ancient Friday Mosque, while its market is a great place to wander around to observe scenes of daily life. Once an important trading town on the Indian Ocean, Moroni has slipped quietly into a forgotten existence where tourists are rare and visitors are treated as a curious novelty. The views out to sea as the sunsets, over tiny ships heading out for an evening's fishing, are unforgettable.

Day 2 - Full Day Exploration of Grande Comore

After breakfast embark on a full-day tour of Grande Comore with private car, driver and English-speaking guide. Visits include Mitsaniouli village, a Ylang-Ylang plantation, Lac Salé and Chomoni for its excellent beach. Overnight Retaj Moroni Hotel* (formally Le Moroni Hotel) or similar. (*please note Retaj Moroni Hotel does not serve alcohol). (BL)

Grande Comore

Officially known as Ngazidja, Grande Comore is the largest of the Comoros Islands but has no rivers or waterways at all – all water is gathered via wells or as rainwater. Prior to the arrival of the French, it was



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divided up into several sultanates. Grande Comore is dominated by Mt Karthala, which at 2361m is the largest active volcano in the world. The island has around 315,000 inhabitants, most of whom are of Arab or African descent.

Day 3 – Anjouan

Transfer to the airport for the short flight to Anjouan. On arrival you will be met and taken on a guided tour of the island, widely accepted as the most beautiful of the three islands which make up the Union of the Comoros. Overnight Al Amal Hotel or similar. (BL)

Anjouan

Anjouan seems to sit uncomfortably within the Comoros nation. In 1997 it declared itself an independent nation, and then asked to be re-integrated into France, but following French refusal re-joined the Comoros in 2002. Not entirely happy with this though, it announced once more its independence in 2007, prompting military action from the Comoros, although it now has a semi-autonomous status. Anjouan is a pretty little island which is the world's principal exporter of ylang-ylang oil, an ingredient found in most perfumes. The island is heavily forested with beautiful beaches and small villages dotted here and there, and like Grande Comore its centre culminates in the peak the 1600m Mt Ntingui.

Day 4 – Anjouan

A day at leisure to simply relax or independently explore the island's capital, Mutsamudu. Overnight Al Amal Hotel or similar. (B)

Day 5 - Mohéli

Morning transfer to the airport for the flight to Mohéli. Depending on the airlines' schedule a connection may be required in Moroni. On arrival you will be met and transferred to Laka Lodge, a small and intimate resort with its own beach. There are a number of optional excursions available including trips to some of the smaller islands nearby, and evening visits to watch turtles lay their eggs in the sand. Overnight Laka Lodge. (BLD)

Mohéli

Mohéli is the smallest of the four islands of the Comoros archipelago, and is the wildest and least populated island of the Union, but also the most scenic and well-preserved, the true 'Pearl of the Comoros'. Nature lovers will like it here – its flora is rich and includes different species of orchids and endemic palms, while animal life includes turtles, the Livingstone fruit bat (the largest bat in the world), whales, dolphins and dugongs. Beaches are pretty and plentiful, especially on the south coast, and you will have long stretches just for yourself. All in all a true island paradise.

Days 6 and 7 – Mohéli

Two days at leisure to enjoy this beautiful island. We have not pre-arranged any sightseeing or activities as Mohéli is very easy to explore independently or optional excursions can be arranged directly with the lodge. Relax and enjoy the different pace of life and meet the friendly local people. If you are feeling a little more energetic, you can arrange a guided hike across the island on tracks of virgin rainforest. Alternatively, you can cycle around the island, on virtually empty roads. Then of course there are the beaches.

Two of the most beautiful are Sambadjou and Nioumachoua. You can also snorkel to discover the rich marine life or even go whale and dolphin watching. Finally, at certain times of the year you may be lucky enough to see giant turtles lay their eggs at night on Itsamia beaches. Overnight Laka Lodge. (BLD)

Day 8 – Moroni

Return to Moroni with free time to explore this charming town further. We stay at a resort a few kilometres out of town, with its own private beach. Another chance to soak up the sun and swim in the clear blue waters of the Indian Ocean. Overnight Golden Tulip Resort & Spa or similar. (B)





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Day 9 - Day at leisure in Moroni or Mt Karthala climb

Today you have the option of leaving Moroni for a climb to the summit of Mt Karthala (2,361m). Although it is possible to do the climb in just one long day, we recommend that you camp at the summit in the crater itself and return the next day. For those not wishing to make the climb, you will have today and the next day to relax or perhaps enquire locally about the options to dive. Overnight Golden Tulip Resort & Spa or similar / camping. (B – Hotel, BLD – camping)

Mt Karthala

Mt Karthala is the largest active volcano in the world and erupts on a fairly regular basis – the last time being in 2005. The climb can be challenging and should only be attempted if you are reasonably fit. It will take about seven hours depending on your personal fitness. Although the slopes are normally blanketed in thick mist for much of the day, the summit and crater are frequently clear, rewarding you with the most spectacular of early morning sunrises. It should be noted that we only recommend attempting the climb during the dry season (between April and November). We will arrange for all camping equipment and supplies to be provided as well as a porter.

Day 10 – Moroni

Your last day in the Comoros to either relax and unwind or take the opportunity to explore more of Grande Comore. Overnight Golden Tulip Resort & Spa or similar. (B)

Day 11 – Departure from Moroni

Day at leisure to either relax or explore further until your transfer to the airport for your onward flight. (B)

Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers
Domestic flights
All accommodation
Services of English-speaking guide / tour leader
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary

Excluded:

International flights
Any airport taxes
Travel Insurance
Visas
Drinks



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Important Information

Foreign Government Travel Warnings

Before booking your tour please familiarise yourself with the country specific information provided by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. This includes important information such as latest immigration requirements, and details of any travel advisories.

Despite the country's turbulent politics, we believe that the Comoros is one of the safest destinations in Africa. We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At the time of writing there are no travel warnings that apply to this tour.

Non-UK nationals should check with their own government, as the information and advice may differ to that provided by British authorities.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore, please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals.

One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.

Accommodation Rating

At Undiscovered Destinations we know our travellers prefer to stay in comfortable, mid-range accommodation which meets our own exacting standards. You can expect rooms to be en-suite, with private bathroom and when necessary air-conditioning will be provided. In general, you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drink

While on our tour in the Comoros you are likely to take most of your meals at the hotels. Comorian food blends African, Arab and European styles and uses a fair amount of spices. Coconut based dishes are quite common, and as you would expect, seafood is good and plentiful.



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Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch £8.00
Dinner £10.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general, you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Bottle of Beer £2.00
Water £1.50

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is common practise in Africa. If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. A reasonable amount to tip a guide would be between \$5-7 per day.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: There are no ATMs in the Comoros which accept international cards. However, a cash advance may be available over the counter at Moroni's main bank using a visa card. You should check with your card issuer before travelling and assume that this is a back-up option only.

Local Currency: Comoros Franc (KMF)

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Not widely accepted, except at some high-end hotels

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Euros. You should also avoid taking large denomination notes such as €100 bills as these may be difficult to exchange

Where to Exchange: Exchange facilities will be available at most of the hotels included in this itinerary. Opportunities for changing money outside of the hotels will be limited – only Moroni has banks capable of changing foreign currency.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight



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information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

Travel Insurance and Altitude

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

If you decide to climb the Mount Karthala, please ensure that your travel insurance is valid for walking at altitude and if you have any doubts please contact your insurance provider. Some travel insurance policies may exclude walking and trekking above a certain altitude.

Visa Information

Most nationals will require a visa to visit the Comoros. As there are very few Comorian Embassies or Consulates, a visa will in most cases be issued on arrival, for a cost of €30, which is valid for a stay of up to 45 days. Passports must have at least three six month's validity remaining from the date of arrival.

All other nationalities, please consult your nearest Embassy for up to date advice on necessary visa requirements.

Please be aware that visa information is subject to change, therefore please refer to your nearest embassy for up to date advice. Please note that the price of your tour does not include visa costs.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to the UK.

We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively, UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Africa, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations. For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. Anti-malaria medication is also required and the use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.



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Preparing for your tour

Climate

The climate is marine tropical, with two seasons: hot and humid from November to April, and cool and dry the rest of the year. In fact, for a significant part of the year Comoros enjoys a near-perfect, balmy 25°C, with the scent of ylang-ylang, cloves, cinnamon and vanilla wafting gently in on the trade winds.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy.

Equipment

Sun cream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have.

Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

Electric Supply & Plugs

Generally electrical supply is 220-240V AC (50 Hz) and use European two circular pin style plugs.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were updated on 7th February 2019.

