

Culinary Experience in Mauritius

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✘ M.M.Khanna, INVC, Chandigarh, Mauritius is a true paradise for the palate and the senses, where the ethnic diversity of the local people is reflected in its cuisine. Mauritius is a mix of culture and also cuisine. The food represents an image of a multi cultural society of ethnical richness. The cuisine of Mauritius is a blend of Creole, Chinese, European and Indian. It's common for a combination of cuisines to form part of the same meal. The outcome of which is a variety of curries, coated and fried vegetables and seafood, roasted/grilled meats served sauce, as well as a variety of dumplings, noodles, biryanis. The street food in Mauritius is fantastic; you can get everything from fresh coconut water, chopped fruit covered in chilli and sugar, hot curries topped with chilli and pickles wrapped in buttery breads, and Chinese fried noodles. Mauritius also has fabulous restaurants from local eateries with authentic food to gourmet places that serve Mauritian fusion food. The best food can be found at various street stalls that bring life to the alleys and bustling city roads, but also inside the homes of the local residents of the island. In Mauritius, the Dhol-puri is part of the local cuisine and is one dish not to be missed at all. The Dhol is yellow split peas cooked with spices. The puri is a kind of bread, wheat flour dough rolled out like the Indian roti which is stuffed with the dhol. This is served with tomato sauce and pickles. Dhol puris are thought to be derived from Indian flatbread, paratha. Mauritius offers many exotic fruits and fruit is a key part of the daily diet. Fruit salad is a popular dessert, often served with a side of unripened pickled fruits. A fruit salad can contain any number of fruits, such as apples, oranges, pineapples, mangoes, lychees, pawpaw, guava and other unusual exotic fruits. A favourite snack is sliced pineapple with chilli salt. The most common ingredients used in Mauritian recipes are tomatoes, onions, garlic and chillies, which cook up with a couple of spices into a delicious fresh tasting sauce used every day called a rougaille. Vegetables, meats and seafood can be cooked in the rougaille and eaten with achars (pickles) and daal or rice. Spices are also a big part of Mauritian cuisine with turmeric, cinnamon, cardamom, and cloves used liberally. Most Mauritian food is hot and spicy, so be careful next time you ask for extra chillis. Biryani is similar to Indian biryani originated by Muslim Mauritians. It is a set of rice-based foods made with spices (such as cloves, crushed cardamom pods, cinnamon stick, star anise, saffron powder and black peppercorns), rice (usually basmati) and meat, fish, eggs or vegetables. The other local foods also include 'faratas', 'Roti Chaud' and 'samosas'. Mauritian cuisine is proud of its heritage, and has also gained a fine reputation in the contemporary culinary world. Mauritius is an island full of good eats and fabulous produce.

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