

Right, Mauritius is an island nation in the Indian Ocean and is known for its beaches, lagoons and reefs



Magical MAURITIUS



There's so much to do on this island paradise that your teens will be ditching their smartphones as soon as they get off the plane,
 writes Deborah Cicurel

The island has a diverse range of flora and fauna; the capital Port Louis; Hinduism is the largest religion in Mauritius



Anyone who's ever seen a child – let alone brought up one of their own – will know of the utter impossibility of dragging them away from technology.

Forget the archaic allure of a book, the competitive buzz of a board game, or the near-extinct notion of going outside to play; it's a struggle to get teens to put down their phones at all. And parents are just as guilty of succumbing to the siren call of all things digital.

Even holidays are no longer holidays: research shows that 90% of Britons on holiday spend at least four hours a day using their gadgets.

Perhaps drastic action is needed in the form of a technology detox. And while turning off the wi-fi signal in your house and demanding everyone goes for a walk in the British drizzle may not be particularly well-received, a digital detox, however, in faraway, sunny, exotic Mauritius is sure to be a big hit.

A hive of activities

On the peaceful south side of the island, there's a welcoming hotel that promises to rid your children of their smartphones (or at least, get them to stop checking them for longer than they ever have before).

Heritage Le Telfair, a gorgeous five-star hotel set in the former sugar plantation of Domaine de Bel Ombre, on the southern coast of Mauritius, has plenty of tricks up its sleeve to make your children forget all about Snapchat and start dreaming of snorkelling.

With a thriving teen activity programme, children can leave their smartphones in their suitcases and indulge in the old-fashioned ritual of making



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friends on holiday while taking part in games of pool, ping pong, tennis, beach volleyball and football. There's also rollerblading on offer, as well as mountain biking tours, and golf lessons at the hotel's renowned golf course.

The Mauritian wildlife tour deserves its very own mention. Teenagers will be able to spot everything from monkeys to wild boars in their natural habitat at the domain's own Frederica Nature Reserve, as well as the chance to explore their surroundings at a speedier pace with quad bikes and Segways.

Windsurfing, waterskiing and kayaking are also on the menu for adventurous children, while for those who want to get closer to the rich aquatic life of the Indian Ocean, snorkelling and glass-bottom boat trips are free of charge.

Memories are made of this

There are memories to be made outside the resort too, of course: one particularly hair-raising activity that brave participants – both young and old – revel in is sea-karting. Effectively go-karting on the sea, the pursuit is exclusive to Mauritius, so there won't be any cries of "been there, done that" – and with the sheer amount of seawater that's sloshed about during particularly rough, speedy patches of racing, you'd be completely mad to bring your phone aboard, fun-adventure.mu.

For a gentler – but just as enjoyable – way to spend the day, it's worth hopping aboard an electro-bike tour around the south of the island, electrobikemauritius.com.

Sportier teens will love flexing their muscle power by working their way up

Above, Mauritius is the perfect place for lots of water-based activities

and down the hills of south Mauritius. Lazier – or should we say more relaxed – parents and children can simply enjoy the breathtaking views of turquoise seas, verdant mountains and deserted beaches while letting their bicycles do all the hard work for them.

Meet the Mauritians

Weaving in and out of bustling streets, in between colourful houses, trilling ice-cream vans and sleepy dogs, the excursion – which can be either three or seven hours long – gives tourists the chance to see beyond the postcard-pretty beaches and perfect elegance of their hotels, into the real Mauritius: a friendly, warm country, where everyone, from tiny children to elderly men, greets you with a smile, where there's always a new corner, full of a rich and



Left, canoeing is one of the many sports that teens can enjoy, right, Heritage Awali





A deluxe room at Heritage Le Telfair starts from £260 per night (two sharing) on a B&B basis, heritageresorts.mu, tel: +230-266-9777.

British Airways has flights from London Gatwick to Mauritius from £855 return, including taxes, britishairways.com

For further information and to find out more about the island's attractions visit tourism-mauritius.mu



vibrant history, to be explored. A lunch stop at a Mauritian house gives cyclists a further insight into the day-to-day life on the island: you'll learn about the vibrant mix of cultures in the country and sample some mouthwatering Indian cuisine.

A culinary paradise

Back at the resort, young culinary palates can be refined in the most enjoyable of ways, with 12 separate restaurants at Heritage Resorts to choose from, each with their own distinct theme, style and menu; they'll be spoilt for choice.

At Château de Bel Ombre, an imposing 1800s colonial French mansion, you can enjoy fresh ingredients and Mauritian cuisine in an elegant setting, while at Gin'ja, as the sea quietly laps nearby, you'll munch on pan-Asian dishes presented in a

show-stopping fashion. There are plenty of other restaurants and bars to enjoy, too, from Zafarani at the nearby Heritage Awali, specialising in tasty North Indian cuisine, to the Club House at Heritage Golf Club, which offers relaxed comfort food and unparalleled views of the vast, manicured, inviting golf course.

The really great outdoors

While, of course, all the rooms are kitted out with wi-fi, flatscreen TVs and speakers, the simple fact remains that the outdoors is where the real fun is to be had.

Get outside, get active and enjoy your holiday in the traditional family way.

And after just a few days of this type of digital detox holiday, you and your children won't even remember how to log on to Instagram. 📱

Above, Heritage Le Telfair is on the south coast of the island and is in the grounds of a former sugar plantation

A PERFECT MIX

Mauritius is located 2,000km off the southeast coast of the African continent, near Madagascar.

It has several different religions – Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism – and three main languages – English, French and Creole.

The summer months from November to April are warm and dry, with temperatures averaging between 23 to 33°C, with the winter months from May to October cool, and the wettest months being from December to March; but the destination is popular all year round, with a host of family-friendly resorts.



Left, the championship golf course at Le Telfair, right, one of the bedrooms with a sea view

