



## **Mauritius is open: live and work in the Covid secure Indian Ocean paradise**

*New long-term visa launched to meet demand from digital nomads, remote workers and retirees*

**Port Louis, Mauritius 05 November 2020** – Mauritius, the Indian Ocean paradise, has launched a new long-stay visa to meet the growing demand from international visitors looking to relocate to the Covid-secure island for work, leisure or retirement. The country's new Premium Visa is valid for one year, with an option to renew, and is open to those who want to relocate to allow them to work remotely, have a long-term second home on the islands or to retire here in 2020, 2021 and beyond.

### **Launched to meet international demand**

The Republic of Mauritius government's new visa offer is in response to strong international demand to relocate to this Indian Ocean country. Thanks to Mauritius' widely-praised handling of the global pandemic and implementation of one of the world's most rigorous national arrival testing provisions, the country is now seen as a perfect destination for long-term relocation as it provides a Covid-secure environment in conjunction with economic, political and legal stability. The collective response by the Mauritius government, and the country as a whole, to Covid means that the country provides an opportunity for long-stay visitors to escape their domestic lockdown restrictions and relocate with the minimum of effort to live and work on Covid-secure islands.

The new Premium Visa is expected to attract thousands of individuals and families who will invest in the country for the long term, particularly those whose jobs allow them to work remotely and those looking for their ideal retirement location. The Premium Visa provides the opportunity for individuals and families to relocate to a country that delivers work-life balance through a developed and advanced infrastructure, making it an ideal location for those looking to maximise their business productivity and leisure time.

Ranked first in Africa in the last World Bank's Doing Business Report, the country provides unparalleled support to work remotely including a transparent financial ecosystem, state-of-the-art telecommunications infrastructure and a reliable ICT connectivity with high capacity undersea fiberoptic network (SAFE and LION) linking Africa to Asia and Europe via Middle East.

Mauritius also offers a diverse selection of long stay rental accommodation options ranging from serviced apartments to beach-side homes. Residents are also permitted to purchase property including luxury villas, pent-houses, apartments and duplexes under specific investment programmes.

An arrival concierge service helping new residents find homes, cars, banking services and telecoms will be in place and Premium Visa holders will also no longer need to leave the country at the end of their visa to renew their temporary visitor status, which will help keep the island more Covid-secure for the longer term.

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## Strict Covid-secure protocols to keep Mauritius safe

In order to keep the country Covid-secure, Mauritius has implemented one of the world's most rigorous health monitoring regimes. The condition of entry requirements mean that all visitors are required to follow health measures. All new arrivals to the island are required to undergo a 14-day quarantine period combined with a pre-departure PCR test, arrival test and follow up tests on 7 and 14 days. Returning Mauritians, diaspora, short and long-term visitors are all asked to follow the same procedures to help keep Mauritius Covid-secure. Some of Mauritius' finest hotels are allocated as arrival facilities. Health protocols are regularly reviewed in line with the country's requirements and the status of the global pandemic.

## International business and tourist destination

Mauritius is a well-known hub for banking, financial and legal services with infrastructure which has developed to support the needs of global business and a large international professional services community. Mauritius already provides world-class connectivity, banking, office space and other business facilities meaning that Premium Visa holders can seamlessly transfer their business operations to the country. Mauritius provides a fully operational Indian Ocean base in a time zone ideal for working remotely with Europe, Asia, Africa and Middle East and is a perfect base for remote workers and digital nomads.

Mauritius also remains open to tourists who are looking for a shorter term Covid-secure holiday destination. Mauritius is best known to international visitors who are looking for an authentic Indian Ocean paradise. Tourism is focused around beautiful beaches, coral reefs, stunning scenery and marine environment as well as leisure activities such as golf, hikes and trails, water sports and scuba diving. Medical tourism, conferences, weddings and honeymoons have all been at the heart of tourism in Mauritius for decades. The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that some of these groups of short-term visitors are understandably unable to meet Mauritius' world-leading 14-day quarantine requirements and Mauritius looks forward to welcoming back these tourists when they are ready to travel again.

Mauritius has long been a favourite of retirees, primarily from South Africa, France, Germany, United Kingdom and other European countries, looking for a second home that provides world-class leisure facilities, homes and activities that only a larger island destination can provide. The Premium Visa provides this group of visitors the long-term security to relocate and maximise their retirement in a Covid-secure destination.

## Launch of the Premium Visa

The Premium Visa was launched at the direction of the Mauritian Prime Minister, Pravind Jugnauth and led by Minister of Finance, Renganaden Padayachy, who said: "Mauritius is open. Visitors are welcome to our country who are looking for a long term safe and secure second home. On arrival we ask all visitors to comply with our strict health requirements and in return we offer visitors a Covid-secure destination with world-class business and leisure infrastructure to help facilitate remote working and retirement plans."

Central to the new Premium Visa service is the private sector as well as individual citizens. Businesses are working closely with government to ensure a smooth transition from arrival health protocols to ensuring new residents have access to the facilities and services they require. An arrival concierge service helping new residents find homes, cars, banking services and telecoms will be in place and run by the business community under the Mauritius Now brand.

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Individual citizens will benefit from increased job opportunities and economic activity. Citizens are also being encouraged to act as 'Welcome Ambassadors' showing the country's new guests around their new home and showing the very best of Mauritius. New residents will be invited to events to meet each other and the communities in which they live.

The Chairman of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA), Nilen Vencadasmy stated: "Mauritius is welcoming long term visitors who are looking to live and work remotely in a Covid secure location. The Mauritius tourism sector has developed innovative packages to welcome visitors as well as facilitate the work of digital nomads. Our island is Covid-safe and with its modern infrastructure is an ideal spot for them to work remotely and to be part of our wider community".

## Visa eligibility and how to apply

The Premium Visa allows for visitors from countries listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Passport Regulations. The following categories of visitors are eligible:

- Repeat tourists who had planned to retire and migrate to Mauritius before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Retirees seeking a Covid-safe haven.
- Investors and professionals who wish to come with their family and work remotely from Mauritius. They also have the possibility to offer this facility to their staff members.
- Visitors who have children studying in Mauritius.

The visa application is open to all nationalities looking for a longer-term temporary residency solution whilst the world is dealing with the pandemic. Mauritius' new Premium Visa is valid for a period of one year and renewable. Applications are open now via the Economic Development Board (EDB) and from 15 November 2020 via a digital application portal.

In order to qualify for the Premium Visa visitors must provide evidence of their long stay plans and must have adequate travel and health insurance for the initial period of stay. The visitor's main place of business and source of income should be outside Mauritius. They will not be allowed to enter the Mauritius Labour Market. All other entry requirements for Mauritius will also apply.

Prior to the introduction of the Premium Visa, foreign nationals were granted a tourist visa for a cumulative period of stay not exceeding 180 days in a calendar year. A tourist visa is normally granted for a short period of leisure travel.

The management of the programme is headed by the Economic Development Board and Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority. The government authorities are working in partnership with the private sector of the country in order to deliver a full package of services for visitors. MTPA and EDB are launching an international marketing campaign targeted at some of the nations hardest hit by Covid over the northern hemisphere winter of 2020/2021. Citizens of France, United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavia, South Africa, India and Russia have all expressed an interest in relocating.

Mauritius has seen a total of 10 deaths from Covid. The last domestic case was on 26 April 2020 and a nationwide lockdown was lifted at the end of May 2020.

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