



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the right.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a valid national license, International Driver's Permit (IDP) and vehicle documents. Carry official identification at all times. Identity checks are common.
- ❑ The official currency is the Comorian Franc (KMF). Euros are accepted in some places.
- ❑ Comoros is a cash society. Credit cards are not widely accepted. There are three banks on the main island. ATM machines are located in some hotels, but are often out of order.
- ❑ There are frequent disruptions to electricity and communications, affecting hospital and clinic services.
- ❑ Visitors should consider hiring a car with a professional local driver. Make arrangements prior to travel through a reputable agency or hotel.
- ❑ Riders of two- and three-wheeled motorized vehicles make up about 17% of all traffic fatalities.
- ❑ Pedestrians account for an estimated 17% of all road deaths.
- ❑ Harassment of women travelers and drivers is common.
- ❑ Avoid walking alone, particularly after dark.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is zero for all drivers. Despite legal limits, alcohol remains a contributing factor in many road crashes.
- ❑ There are 37.4 road deaths per 100,000 people in Comoros, compared to 2.2 in Sweden and 2.3 in the UK.



Source: CIA Factbook

ROAD CULTURE

- **Driving standards** are poor. Erratic road behavior is common.
- **Motorists** often leave cars parked in roadways.
- **Many** drivers fail to use headlights at night.
- **Motorbike** drivers may have little training and be unfamiliar with basic road rules and safety practices.
- **There are** many hitchhikers along roads and at intersections.
- **Most** schoolchildren walk to and from schools. Be alert to the presence of children on or near roads.
- **Many pedestrians** walk in and along unlit roads, and may suddenly step into traffic.

ROAD CONDITIONS

- **Of the** 880 km (547 miles) of roads, 673 km (418 miles) are paved and 207 km (129 miles) are unpaved.
- **Comoros** consists of four main islands: Anjouan (Nzwani), Mayotte (Mahoré), Mohéli (Mwali), and Grande Comore (Ngazidja). The country is geographically located between northern Mozambique and Madagascar.
- **Rental car agencies** are largely limited to Grande Comore island.
- **Most roads** are unpaved and poorly maintained. Roads that are paved are located in urban areas.
- **Roads** are unlit or inadequately lit.
- **There is** a main road along the coast of each island.
- **All roads** on Mohéli are in disrepair.
- **The main road** along the coast around Grande Comore island has a paved surface that is of reasonable standards. Other roads on the island are generally in poor condition.
- **Roads** are narrow and there is little signage.
- **Large potholes** are common.
- **Many roads** are winding, with dangerous curves. Guardrails are lacking, even in mountainous areas.
- **Lack of** roads leads to frequent traffic congestion.
- **Pedestrian** infrastructure is underdeveloped in most areas, and undeveloped in many parts of the country. There are few sidewalks or crossings.
- **Pedestrians** are at high risk. Driving standards are poor. Motorists may not be alert to the presence of those on foot.
- **Communication** systems are unreliable. Carry up-to-date paper maps. A satellite phone is recommended, but may be undependable.
- **Avoid all** public demonstrations. Past protests between demonstrators and police have become violent.
- **There are** ongoing political disputes regarding the status of the island of Mayotte.
- **Demonstrations** can result in disruptions to road travel and public transportation.



Road Conditions, continued

- **Curfews** may be imposed with little or no notice, affecting road travel.
- **Island roads** may present particular challenges to motorists:
 - » **All paved roads** become hazardous following heavy rains. Risks include “hydroplaning,” which occurs when vehicle tires lose traction on paved road surfaces; this occurs more frequently when tires are worn, or water has accumulated on surfaces.
 - » **Mountain road** dangers increase during inclement weather and after dark. Roads are unlit or poorly lit. Most surfaces are unpaved, and large potholes are common; potholes may be obscured when filled with rainwater or mud.
 - » **Many roads** have sharp turns and lack guardrails or signs warning of curves.
 - » **All roads** may have debris or hazards, including tree branches, following storms or high winds.

REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **Comoros** is subject to severe storms, monsoons and seismic activity, including volcanic eruptions.
- **The rainy season** is generally from December to April.
- **Tropical cyclones** occur from January to May.
- **Karthala** is an active volcano near Moroni on Grande Comore island. Tremors may occur in the surrounding area.
- **During** the religious month of Ramadan, fasting can result in dehydration and reduced alertness in drivers and pedestrians.
- **Be familiar with emergency procedures.** The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

TRANSPORTATION

- **Transportation** options include cars, minibuses (called “taxi brousse”), shared taxis, motorbikes, bicycles and boats.
- **Public transportation** is provided by minibuses, which are regarded as dangerous.
- **Minibuses** are often overcrowded. Drivers do not depart until all seats are filled.
- **Shared taxis** are the main form of transport on all islands. Vehicles are generally overcrowded. Drivers may refuse to depart until satisfied with the number of passengers, which may exceed vehicle capacity.
- **Use only** licensed taxis displaying taxi signs.
- **Most taxis** are operated by independent drivers. Condition of vehicles and driver skills vary.
- **Where available,** taxis may be hailed on the street. There are few taxis on the island of Mohéli.
- **Taxis** are scarce at night, on Sundays and on holidays.
- **Pedestrian** infrastructure is poor. Many areas lack sidewalks.
- **Some people** travel by bicycle in flat sections of the islands.
- **Cycling** infrastructure is undeveloped; bicycles share roads with motorized traffic.
- **Boats** connecting islands, including open fishing boats called “vedettes,” are poorly regulated. Overcrowding is common, and frequently results in capsized vessels.
- **Use only** official, commercially licensed ferries equipped with adequate numbers of lifesaving devices and ship-to-

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	30 kph (18 mph)
Rural roads	No official speed limit
Highways	No official speed limit

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

Two-way traffic crossing	Unpaved road surface ahead	Upcoming skewed T-junction	Sharp curve in road	Concealed side road or driveway	Soft road shoulder	Pedestrian crossing	Slow down: road crash ahead	Dual carriageway ends

Transportation, continued

- shore communication systems; these include modern vessels operated by SGTM ferries (Société de Gestion et de Transport Maritime).
- **There is** no ferry service to Mohéli. Transport is limited to vedettes and private boats.
- **Avoid** private speedboats used as informal transport between islands.
- **Piracy** is an ongoing threat in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean.
- **For additional** safety, bring your own life preserver when traveling by boat, and do not board ferries during rough seas or inclement weather.

drivers have held a license for at least one year. Some agencies may have additional requirements.

- **Seat belt** use is required for drivers and front seat passengers. For safety, all occupants should wear fastened seat belts.
- **Children** are allowed to ride in front seats. For safety, children should ride in back seats, and should be secured in safety restraints appropriate to age and size.
- **Helmet use** is not required. Motorcyclists, motorbike riders and bicyclists should wear securely fastened helmets for safety.
- **Children** are not restricted from being passengers on motorcycles.
- **There are no** laws governing right-of-way at roundabouts and intersections.
- **Speed limits** are rarely posted.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Drivers must** be at least 18 years of age, and 23 years old to rent a car. Rental agencies generally require that

Moroni (Capital)

- » Largest city. Located on the island of Grande Comore (Ngazidja).
- » Transportation options include cars, taxis, shared taxis, minibuses (“taxi brousse”) and boats.
- » Driving is not recommended. Visitors should consider hiring a car with a professional local driver from a reputable agency. Make arrangements prior to travel.
- » There is no city bus network.
- » Minibuses are the main form of public transport, and are regarded as dangerous.
- » Overcrowding on minibuses is common. Drivers may refuse to depart until all seats are filled.
- » Minibus stops (called “stations”) serve specific areas of the island: Gare du Nord and Volo Volo have routes to the north; buses from Gobadjou and Karthala stops have southern routes; and the Chalma stop and Culée roundabout stop serve areas in the east.
- » Bus stops/stations are not centrally located. A taxi may be required to reach the appropriate stop.
- » There are no fixed schedules. In general, minibuses run only during morning hours.
- » Many people travel by shared taxi. Vehicles are often overcrowded, and drivers not depart until all seats are filled.
- » Use only licensed taxis displaying signs. Most taxis are operated by independent drivers. Condition of vehicles and driver skills vary.
- » Taxis may be hailed on the street, but are generally difficult to find on Sundays, holidays and at night.
- » Pedestrian infrastructure is poor. Drivers often ignore those on foot, even where crosswalks are present.
- » Cycling infrastructure is undeveloped. Cyclists share roads with motorized traffic.
- » Ferry routes are available to other islands within Comoros, but may not be available every day. Service is subject to weather and sea conditions. Use only official, commercially licensed ferries equipped with adequate numbers of lifesaving devices and ship-to-shore communication systems; these include modern vessels operated by SGTM ferries (Société de Gestion et de Transport Maritime). For additional safety, bring your own life preserver, and do not board ferries during rough seas or inclement weather.
- » All boats, including open fishing boats called “vedettes,” are poorly regulated. Overcrowding is common, and frequently results in capsized vessels.
- » Do not use private speedboats offering informal transport between islands. Vessels may not be seaworthy.
- » Piracy remains a threat in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean.
- » Prince Said Ibrahim International Airport is located 20 km (12.4 miles) north of the city.



Moroni, continued

- » Transportation to and from the airport is limited to taxis and rental cars.
- » If renting a vehicle, check condition carefully before signing agreement. Many cars are in poor condition and lack standard safety features, including working seat belts.

Mutsamudu

- » Second largest city. Located on the island of Anjouan.
- » Transportation options include cars, minibuses (“taxi brousse”), shared taxis, motorbikes, bicycles and boats.
- » Streets are narrow and in poor condition.
- » Driving can be challenging due to poor and unmaintained surface conditions and a lack of signs.
- » Visitors should consider hiring a car with a professional local driver from a reputable agency prior to travel.
- » Minibuses are the only form of public transportation. Vehicles are generally overcrowded.
- » Minibuses are regarded as dangerous.
- » Most people travel by shared taxi. Condition of vehicles varies widely.
- » Number of passengers may exceed vehicle capacity in shared taxis.
- » Taxis can be hailed on the street. Availability decreases on Sundays, holidays and in the evening.
- » Use only licensed taxi vehicles displaying taxi signs.
- » The majority of taxis are operated by independent drivers. Condition of vehicles and driver training varies.
- » Pedestrians are at risk. There is little pedestrian infrastructure. Drivers often ignore persons on foot.
- » Cycling is dangerous. Bicycles share roads with undisciplined motorized traffic.
- » Boat regulation is poor. Ferries and other boats linking islands include open fishing boats called “vedettes.” Overcrowding is common, and often results in capsized vessels.
- » Do not board private speedboats used as informal transport between islands. These boats pose high risks. Condition of many speedboat vessels is poor, and they may not be large enough to navigate rough seas.
- » Use only official, commercially licensed ferries equipped with adequate numbers of lifesaving devices and ship-to-shore communication systems; these include modern vessels operated by SGTM ferries (Société de Gestion et de Transport Maritime). For additional safety, bring your own life preserver, and do not board ferries during rough seas or inclement weather.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **Access to** transportation, accommodations, public buildings and communications, including signs and interpreters, are limited for persons with mobility, sensory or other challenges.
- **Few** buildings have elevators.
- **Sidewalks** are lacking. Existing sidewalks do not have curb cuts to assist persons in wheelchairs or those who have limited mobility.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
- **Few responders** to emergency numbers or police officers speak English.
- **Emergency numbers:**
 - » Police, ambulance and fire: 17
 - » Medical assistance: 269 772 03 73
- **Responses** to emergency situations are inadequate.
- **Medical care** is limited throughout the country and may be below western standards.
- **Private clinics** are available in main cities, but advance membership is required to receive treatment.
- **In the event** of serious illness or injury, evacuation to another country may be necessary.



Emergency Information, continued

- **Power outages** may affect the safe storage of some medications; low water supplies in hospitals are a problem.
- **Some medicines** prescribed in other countries are illegal in Comoros. Verify legality of medicines prior to travel, and carry medications in original packaging, accompanied by a written prescription from your physician.
- **Professional** roadside assistance is unavailable.
- **If involved in a crash:**
 - » Call police. If there is no response, make your way to the nearest police station.



ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL (ASIRT)

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

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Association for Safe International Road Travel, 11769 Gainsborough Road, Potomac, MD 20854 USA,

Phone: 1-240-249-0100; Email: asirt@asirt.org; Website: www.asirt.org; Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ASIRT.org/>