

# HIKING RÉUNION ISLAND

## ITINERARY

### Day 1 Saint Denis - Hell Bourg

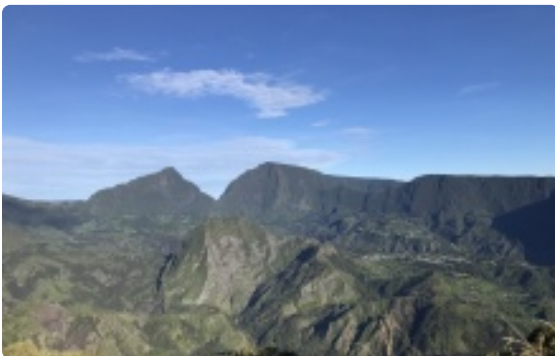


Welcome to Réunion Island! Transfer from St-Dennis to the small village of Hell Bourg. Found at 930m in Le cirque du Salazie, this charming village is littered with colourful Créole houses, each more beautiful than the last, and surrounded by the lush vegetation of the calm Salazie commune.

Accommodation: Gîte

Journey time: 1 1/2 hours

### Day 2 Hell Bourg - Bélouve



Immerse yourself in the primary forest of Bélouve. This enchanting world is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna including 'fanjans', tree ferns and famous giant tamarins. As you approach your accommodation, be sure to enjoy the fabulous viewpoint with its grand panorama of the Cirque de Salazie and please be aware that our support vehicles cannot reach you in the heart of this dense rainforest so remember to carry and drink lots of

water.

2 to 3 hours of walking

Elevation: +580m / -60m

Accommodation: Gîte

Night without luggage - you will be reunited with your bags tomorrow evening.

### Day 3 Trou de Fer Canyon & the Forest of Bébou



Early morning departure for the Trou de Fer (Iron Hole) Canyon, an impressive chasm in the heart of the tropical forest of Bébou where waterfalls tumble to impossible depths of 300m... To venture into Bébou forest is to venture into a world of legends, let your imagination go wild in this enchanting world of tortuous trees. Tonight we return to our accommodation in Hell Bourg.

*3 to 5 hours of walking*

*Elevation: +350m / -870m*

*Accommodation: Gîte*

*Your luggage will be waiting for you.*

#### 📍 Day 4 **Hell Bourg - Col des Boeufs - La nouvelle**



After a relaxed morning in Hell Bourg in preparation for the upcoming two day trek, we will escort you to the start along an aptly named forest road, the 'Hauts de Mafate' or the 'heights of Mafate'. Today's walk begins by passing through the Col des Boeufs pass from the Cirque de Salazie to the Cirque de Mafate. From here it is a gentle descent via la Plaine des Tamarins plateau to your accommodation in La Nouvelle, the most accessible settlement in Mafate.

*3 hours of walking*

*Elevation: +190 / -610*

*Accommodation: Gîte*

*Night without luggage - you will be reunited with your bags in Cilaos on Day 6.*

#### 📍 Day 5 **La nouvelle - Marla**



Today begins with a stroll to Trois Roches for a surprising waterfall top view of the river Galets. With this angle overlooking the riverbed it is easy to imagine how the stream can transform into a torrent during cyclonic floods. Follow the riverbed up to one of Mafates delightful settlements, Marla (1630m).

*4 hours of walking*

*Elevation: +660/-460*

*Accommodation: Gîte*

*Night without luggage - you will be reunited with your bags in Cilaos tomorrow.*

📍 Day 6 **Marla - Col de Taïbit - Cilaos**



Since the beginning of this two day trek you have been approaching the col du Taïbit (2083m), the passage which links the Cirque de Mafate to the Cirque de Cilaos. Today you reach the col; with a spectacular display of the surrounding cirques, the south coast and Grand Bénare volcanic peak, its views do not disappoint. The route continues down through the thick vegetation of the 'Bois des Couleurs' to Cilaos. From here, it is a 15 minute local

bus or a 2 hour walk via the Bras Rouge (Red Arms) waterfall to your accommodation.

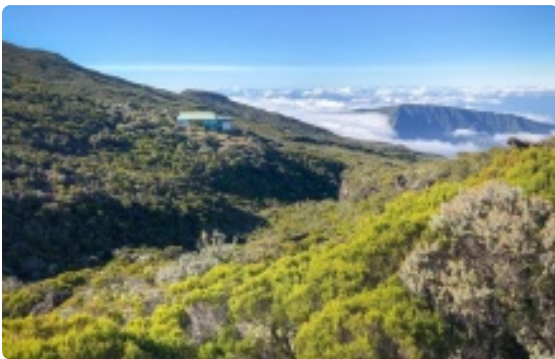
*4 hours of walking (or 6 if you choose not to take the bus)*

*Elevation: +490m / -850m (or 680+ / 1020-)*

*Accommodation: Gîte*

*Your luggage will be waiting for you.*

📍 Day 7 **Cilaos - Piton des Neiges Refuge**



This morning, you can take a 15 minute bus to the beginning of your hike to avoid around 45 minutes of walking along the road. The shaded path up to tonight's refuge is steep. Along the way there are many beautiful view points to admire Cilaos from. You should find shelter and water halfway up but beware, this water point is not always refilled in times of drought. The climb continues up to rewarding views and around 2500m of altitude.

*3 to 4 hours of walking*

*Elevation: +1140m / -50m*

*Accommodation: Gîte*

*Night without luggage - you will be reunited with your bags tomorrow evening.*

📍 Day 8 **The Piton des Neiges - Cilaos**



Nighttime departure for the summit of the Piton des Neiges. You should reach the top as the sun rises around you. From the refuge, it is approximately a two hour hike to the pinnacle of the island - 3070m above sea level, the highest point in the Indian Ocean. The views from here are truly amazing - even more so as your surroundings are illuminated by the first glow of the morning sun. Return to the refuge for breakfast and the long descent down to



Cilaos. After this challenging trek, it may be advisable to take the bus to once again avoid walking along the road Cilaos.

*5 to 6 hours of walking*

*Elevation: +630m / -1720m*

*Accommodation: Gîte*

*Your luggage will be waiting for you.*

#### 📍 Day 9 **Cilaos- St Pierre - Piton de la Fournaise**

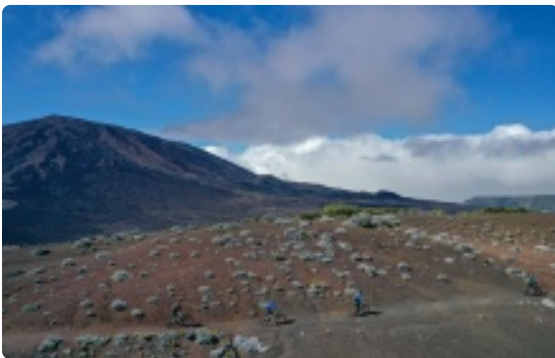


Transfer to Piton de la Fournaise via the coastal arrondissement of St-Pierre with its marina, white sand-beaches and lagoon. A delightful place and a striking contrast to the rugged mountainous terrain of the last few days. On the way to the Piton de la Fournaise volcano we can also visit the Volcano House museum (payable locally; approx. 1 1/4 hours) before joining our accommodation, the Gîte du Volcan (Volcano Lodge).

*Accommodation: Gîte*

*Your luggage will be waiting for you.*

#### 📍 Day 10 **The Piton de la Fournaise**



Short morning transfer to the start of today's spectacular hike on one of the most active volcanoes in the world. A rich world of strange colours, surprising minerals and warped shapes awaits. Fumaroles and sulphur reveal glimpses of the intense activity of this unique shield volcano. Afternoon transfer to the Southwest coast.

*5 hours of walking*

*Elevation: +630m / -630m*

*Accommodation possible upon request.*

The details in this indicative programme are updated regularly but imponderables and unpredictable circumstances may result in inaccuracies. In order to provide the adventure which is best suited to your demands, the weather and the operational conditions, changes to the programme may be made. For safety reasons, we reserve the rights to interrupt your participation in this programme at any time if your technical level or fitness are deemed unsuitable or if you are seen as a danger to yourself or to those around you. This will in no case give rise to refunds or compensation.

**PERIOD & BUDGET**

## When to travel?

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The best period for travelling is during the following months:



## Price

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**From 1090 € per person (price based on 2 participants)**

*The budget is an indication of the price per person, subject to availability. Your local agent will send you a customized quote with the exact price. The price can vary according to availability, level of services, period of travel, number of participants, booking time frame and other items.*

## Included

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- Gîte accommodation with shared facilities
- Half-board from dinner Day 1 to breakfast Day 10
- All in-country transfers by private vehicle as detailed in the itinerary
- Luggage transportation as detailed in itinerary
- Secure baggage storage
- A detailed roadbook including, local tips, vouchers and your comprehensive itinerary
- 24/7 phone support during your trip

## Not included

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- International flights
- Lunches (approx. 8 to 10€/pers. for picnic lunches or 15 to 20€/pers. for restaurant meals)
- Dinner on Day 10 (approx. 20 to 25€/pers.)
- Accommodation for the last night (Day 10)
- Repatriation insurance
- Bus tickets

## Additional options

- Private double room upgrade (3 to 5€/pers./night. Subject to availability)
- Hotel accommodation in Hell Bourg and Cilaos (Prices vary. Subject to availability)
- Accompaniment by a qualified Mountain Guide for one day, several days or for the whole trip

## Terms and conditions

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### Booking conditions

Booking a trip with us implies acceptance of the terms and conditions of sale. Each customer is required to complete a registration form and, subject to availability at the time of registration, travellers are expected to pay a deposit of 30% of the total price to complete their booking. You will then receive an e-mail with your booking confirmation. In case of late bookings – within 30 days prior to the travel departure date – the full travel price is due immediately. Payments can be settled via bank transfer or made online on our website. You will receive an email with a booking confirmation as quickly as possible.

## ***Invoice procedure***

Once your booking is registered, you will receive an email with the invoice. Full payment is required at least 30 days before the departure date. If this payment is not settled within the period agreed upon, Altaï Réunion reserves the right to cancel your registration without compensation.

## ***Cancellation policy***

If for any reason **you** have to cancel your trip, we require written confirmation of your decision so please contact us by e-mail, fax or letter. The money you have paid will then be refunded according to the following deductions:

- Cancellation received more than 30 days prior to the departure date: No cancellation fees.
- Cancellation received 30 to 21 days before the departure date: 30% of trip price will be retained.
- Cancellation received within 20 days of the departure date: 70% of trip price will be retained.

Please note if you decide to cancel your trip having agreed, in writing, to pay for additional tailor-made services (hotel, additional flights or activities...), these services are usually non-refundable.

If **we** have to cancel a departure due to an insufficient number of participants, you will be informed no later than 21 days before departure and a full refund will be issued, you will not be entitled to further compensation. We reserve the rights to cancel departures due to exceptional circumstances which may impact the safety of participants. Such circumstances may include those amounting to 'force majeure' in which case participants will receive a full refund but they will not be entitled to any compensation.

## ***Changes to travel contract***

If you wish to make a change to your booking please contact us in writing; you will be expected to pay any fee which might arise from this change. In the event of unforeseen external events, Altaï Réunion may change some aspects of the travel contract. If any changes are necessary you will be informed as quickly as possible.

## ***Pricing***

The prices on our website are updated regularly. Our advertised group travel prices have been calculated in accordance with the indicated number of participants for each trip. We reserve the rights to make changes to any of our prices if necessary, for example in case of exchange rate changes or modifications in fuel costs. Before you make a booking we will give you the up-to-date price of your chosen holiday including any supplements, upgrades, additional activities and/or facilities you have requested. A small group surcharge may be applied if the total number of participants is less than indicated. For each trip, the price per person valid for the minimum number of participants is outlined as is a detailed explanation of the services included/not.

## ***Contract transfer***

If you are unable to travel for any reason, you can transfer your booking to another person in which case our modification conditions apply. Both the transferor and transferee will be jointly and severally liable for payment of the total holiday price and other associated expenses. Some airline carriers treat name changes as cancellations and you may be required to pay for the cost of a new ticket.

## ***Insurance***

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We strongly recommend that you take out personal travel insurance for your trip with Altaï Réunion as soon as your booking is confirmed. We advise you to purchase a travel insurance policy which covers flight cancellations, luggage loss and emergency health care. Please look carefully at which activities are covered by your insurer and do not forget to bring all necessary documents and information with you (name of the company, name of the contract, insurance policy number, telephone number...)

## **PRACTICAL INFO**

### ***Staff***

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This trip is not necessarily a guided adventure. You will be assisted by one of Altaï Réunions trusty drivers, responsible for your transfers and luggage transportation.

### ***Food***

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#### **Breakfasts:**

Continental style breakfasts are served at your accommodation each morning. You can expect tea, coffee, fruit juice, bread, butter, jam and maybe meats and cheeses.

#### **Lunches:**

Not included in the trip price. You can purchase pre-prepared picnic lunches from your accommodation during your stay to carry with you each day. These meals include fresh seasonal produce, cheese, meat, salad and fruit. Please be aware that, due to the inaccessibility of the Réunions remote communes, grocery stores are not always well stocked. We recommend purchasing snacks to carry with you whenever you can.

#### **Dinners:**

Hot, hearty, home cooked meals of local cuisine are served at your accommodation. Supplies in this remote area are delivered by helicopter so evening meals may not vary greatly but you sure to love the mix of French, Indian, Chinese and African flavours that is Creole cuisine. The traditional dish is a curry with tomatoes, onions, garlic, ginger and spices served with either chicken, duck or fish and accompanied by rice, grains (beans or lentils) and rougail, a spicy condiment flavoured with tomato, lemon and pistachio.

#### **Drinks:**

Drinks, including mineral water, can be purchased at your own expense. Options include local rums, beer or fruit juice. The rum is made by soaking fruits, aromatic herbs and spices in white rum and are served as an aperitif before dinner or as a digestive after a hearty meal. A beer called Dodo is brewed by the same local company and you will have the chance to try succulent fruit juice, freshly made from seasonal fruit.

We recommend purchasing an adequate supply of suitable snacks before your trip to bring with you to avoid be hungry on hikes during the day. We also advice that you bring a good water bottle which can be refilled at your accommodation reducing our collective plastic waste. Please let us know about

any dietary requirements when you book this trip and we will work with you to cater for your needs.

## **Accommodation**

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Usually our travellers sleep in mountain accommodation with shared bathroom facilities and dormitories of 4 to 10 people (with the exception of one dorm. in a refuge at the Piton des Neiges which sleeps 8 to 16 people). Hot showers are not always free, notably in the Piton de la Fournaise area where water is a rare commodity or in the refuge at the Piton des Neiges where there is no running water.

On certain trips you will be accommodated in bed and breakfasts or 2\* and 3\* hotels for some nights, including in Cilaos, to maximise your comfort.

## **Transportation**

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In-country travel and baggage transfer by private minibus.

On certain trips, due to the absence of roads on Réunion Island, you may not see your larger bags and have to keep your important personal belongings on you for one or more days. This is notably the case when crossing the cirque de Mafate or climbing the Piton des Neiges.

## **Budget & exchange**

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**The currency is the Euro, € (EUR)**

Visit <http://www.xe.com> for the latest currency converter and exchange rates. You can withdraw euros from in-country ATMs and credit cards are widely accepted except in isolated areas like small villages or mountain refuges which are generally cash only.

Please budget for lunches, drinks, tips, bus tickets, museum entry fees and other personal expenses. Please be aware that hot showers are not always free.

## **Tips**

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Although the custom is not widespread here, tipping is always appreciated - it is not obligatory and should be left to the discretion of each individual.

## **Vital equipment**

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**From head to toe:**

- A cap or sunhat
- 1 or 2 sets of thermals: long-sleeved thermal tops and full-length long johns
- Long sleeved and short sleeved t-shirts, preferably in quick-drying technical material
- 1 light fleece or equivalent (plus extra warm layers for austral winter months)
- A breathable wind proof, waterproof jacket (Gore-Tex...)
- Lightweight waterproof over trousers
- 1 pair of long suitable shorts
- 1 pair of walking trousers (detachable legs ideal)
- A pair of high-rise walking boots with vibram soles - Réunions trails can be rocky and muddy
- A pair of trainers or equivalent casual shoes for the evenings
- Thick walking socks



- Warm gloves, hat and scarf (for June - September trips and those which climb up to the cirques or high mountains)
- A swimsuit

## **Helpful equipment**

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- Sleeping bag liner. Sheets and blankets are provided except in the refuge at Piton des Neiges where there are only blankets
- A tupperware box or bowl and cutlery for picnics
- Your personal toiletries - think to use as many biodegradable products as possible.
- Fast-drying microfibre towel
- Water bottle(s). Min. 2litres, light and isothermal
- A good pair of sunglasses (think min. category 3)
- Sun-cream, face and lips
- Head torch and spare batteries
- A pocket knife
- A pair of hiking poles
- A waterproof bag cover (or plastic bags) to protect your belongings

## **Luggage**

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Your luggage must be divided into two bags:

- A rucksack (35-40L or 45-50L) for use as a day bag. This will contain your (vital) personal belongings for the day, or sometimes for several days. If you buy food on the way and carry only the bare essentials you can carry a small, light bag.
- A larger bag (60-80L) containing the rest of your belongings, those which you do not need with you in the daytime. This bag will be transported by our driver to your accommodation each day. Sometimes, as detailed in your itinerary, you will not see this bag for one or more nights. Please bring a soft bag like a rucksack or holdall rather than a hard cased suitcase because it is more practical for our drivers.

## **Medicine**

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We recommend that you bring a small personal first aid kit containing any medication you may need such as inhalers, plasters, antiseptic and painkillers.

## **Passport**

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To go to Réunion Island travellers may need a passport which is valid for at least three months after the last day of their stay, EU travellers may use passports/ID cards valid only for the duration of their stay. It is your responsibility to confirm your specific passport requirements and please be aware that proof of onwards travel may be required.

## **Visa**

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Most travellers staying less than 3 months in Réunion Island do not need to obtain a visa. It is your responsibility to confirm your specific visa requirements.

## ***Mandatory vaccines***

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No mandatory vaccinations are required. Recommended vaccines include Hepatitis and Typhoid.

## ***Health information & recommendations***

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It is your responsibility to check that your personal health insurance covers everything in this trip. A consultation with your doctor is a prerequisite for any trip.

## ***Weather***

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Réunion Island has a tropical climate with two different seasons: The cool, dry austral winter from April to September and the austral summer from October to Mars, the hot, humid season.

**April to June** - temperatures remain a comfortable average of 20°C during the day and 10°C at night. It is at this time that the flora and fruits are at their most bountiful.

**July to September** - temperatures are cooler and perfect for hikers who suffer in the heat. It is on average 16-20°C during the day and at night, temperatures drop much lower, often below 0°C. It is not uncommon to see snow on the Piton des Neiges.

**October to December** - average temperatures are around 25°C in the day and 18°C at night.

**January to Mars** - the hurricane season which brings heavy rainfall and trekking is disrupted.

## ***Electricity***

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European-style plugs with two round pins. Voltage is normally 220/240 V, 50 Hz. Please be aware that some mountain huts use solar electricity which is only 24V and very limited when it comes to charging batteries.

## ***Local time***

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Réunion Island uses the Réunion time zone (RET). Coordinated Universal Time (UTC)/ Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) +4. Daylight Saving Time (DST) is not observed here.

## ***Topography***

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**Surface area:** 2,512 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** Nearly 850,000 inhabitants

**Currency:** The Euro

**Status:** French overseas region and Special Member of the European Union

**Religions:** 72% Catholic. Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist religions are also popular.

**Language:** French and Créole

**Fun fact:** More than 40% of Réunion Island is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site

## ***Sustainable tourism***

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Altaï always aims to have as little impact on the environment as possible. As adventure and wilderness travel experts who run trips to some of the most remote parts of the world, we take responsible tourism very seriously.

Since the beginning, we have advocated for responsible tourism and the importance of equitable and sustainable principles. Harmonising these fundamentals ensures a fair distribution of economic benefits, improved working conditions for local teams and an increased awareness of the importance and practice of environmental protection.

We kindly request that you adopt the following simple actions when travelling with Altaï Réunion in order to support our ethical, sustainable and responsible tourism policies:

- Avoid dropping litter - use bins or carry your rubbish with you.
- Use drinking water sparingly - avoid wasting water, take showers not baths, report leaks, etc..
- Support the preservation of cultural sites - resist the temptation to touch statues, move stones etc..
- Exchanges are preferable to donations - generations gifts can destabilize the local economic balance.
- When walking, be aware of fragile ecosystems, observe wildlife from a distance, stick to trails, limit trampling and do not steal from the nature - resist the temptation to pick flowers, collect fossils or stones...
- Some hotels have air conditioning - to avoid excessive energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, please use sparingly and remember to cut the aircon when you are not in the room.

MAP

