








THE ESSENTIAL ROAD TRIP

Welcome to the land of Créole ! Discover a self-guided trip for you and your vehicle ... Explore the heart of the amazing cirques: Mafate, Cilaos et Salazie. From dense rainforests, rugged green peaks and wild waterfalls to the alien atmosphere of Piton de la Fournaise, where lava flows spring from time to time...

 Region	Cilaos Mafate Piton de la Fournaise Salazie The Coast
 Activity	Tailor-made adventures & road trips
 Duration	8 days
 Code	QRUNAUFITALT
 Price	From €1,175
 Level	1/5
 Comfort	3/5

ITINERARY

Day 1 Hell Bourg - Grand Ilet

Collect your vehicle then hit the road, direction le Cirque de Salazie. Here you can visit Hell Bourg and Maison Folio, the local history museum (payable locally). Explore this timeless village where giant bamboos and lush vegetation thrive. Continue towards the small hamlet of Grand Ilet, nestled at the foot of the famous cirque de Mafate where your accommodation awaits. Note: We recommend collecting your vehicle as early as possible to make the most of today.

Accommodation: Gîte

Driving time: 3 hours

Day 2 The Cirque de Mafate

Take the aptly named forest road, the 'Hauts de Mafate' or the 'heights of Mafate' to Col des Boeufs for the start of your first day hiking in the Cirque de Mafate. The heart of this historical area is only accessible by foot. Leave your car in Col des Boeufs car park (10€/day payable locally), pack an overnight bag and enjoy a beautiful hike to La Nouvelle and the delightful village of Marla. Alternatively, you can choose to climb Trois Roches to unlock a strange volcanic world and surprising waterfall top view - 7 hours of walking; +700m/-900m.

5 hours of walking

Elevation: +500/-800

Accommodation: Gîte (Night without vehicle)

Driving time: 45 minutes

Day 3 Marla - Col des Boeufs - Plaine des Cafres

Continue your exploration of the iconic Cirque de Mafate - return to the Col des Boeufs via the Plaine des Tamarins plateau and the Bois de Couleur, 'the colourful forest'. Cross back into the Cirque de Salazie to collect your vehicle, then head East along the coastal road to your accommodation at the Plaine des Cafres plateau.

4 hours of walking

Elevation: +700/-400

Accommodation: Gîte

Driving time: 3 hours

Day 4 Climbing the Piton de la Fournaise

We recommend an early start to your day exploring the most active volcano in the world, the Piton de la Fournaise. Cross the alien landscapes of the la plaine des Sables and join a strange landscape of recently formed calderas. A rich world of strange colours, surprising minerals and warped shapes awaits you as you begin your volcano hike. Fumaroles and sulphur reveal glimpses of the intense activity of this unique shield volcano. We also recommend visiting the Volcano House Museum (~11€/pers. payable locally) before returning to your accommodation in la Plaine des Cafres.

6 hours of walking

Elevation: +630/-630

Accommodation: Gîte

Driving time: 50 minutes

Day 5 Saint-Pierre via the road of lava

Join the Route des Laves, 'the road of lava' via Sainte-Rose. As the road winds along solidified lava flows revealing a rich and beautiful world of minerals, you will find yourself in the natural spillway for most of the volcano action in Réunion Island. You can explore vanilla farms and the Grand Galet waterfall near Saint-Joseph on your way to St-Pierre and your hotel.

Accommodation: Hôtel

Dinner not included

Driving time: 3h30

📍 Day 6 **Visit Saint-Pierre - Road to Cilaos**

Visit Saint-Pierre coastal town and beach before taking the road to the Cirque de Cilaos. Follow the wiggly road to the mountain village of Cilaos where the Piton des Neiges (3070m), the Islands highest peak dominates the skyline. Wine tasting to sample the famous wine of Cilaos is possible. Check-in to your hotel for two nights.

Accommodation: Hôtel

Dinner not included

Driving time: 1 1/2 hours

📍 Day 7 **The Cirque de Cilaos**

Why not have an active day hiking, river walking, canyoning or climbing? The Cirque de Cilaos is an outdoor activity lovers paradise. We also recommend taking the D 242 to Cordes, a winding road with many little settlements to explore and sumptuous panoramic views.

Accommodation: Hôtel

Dinner not included

Driving time: 1 hour

📍 Day 8 **Black sand beaches - The Cap de la Houssaye - Saint Gilles**

Leave Cilaos, direction: The West Coast and discover the Cap la Houssaye with its black sand beaches and basaltic cliffs. This beautiful place is a fragile savanna with a rich array of flora and fauna. Return your vehicle in Saint-Gilles this afternoon.

Dinner not included

Driving time: 2 hours

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?

The best period for travelling is during the following months:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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Price

Prices from 790 € 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

- Gîte accommodation with shared facilities Day 1 to Day 4
- Half-board from dinner Day 1 to breakfast Day 5
- Hotel accommodation with breakfasts Day 5 to Day 7
- Vehicle hire for 8 days - category B, basic insurance and unlimited mileage
- A detailed roadbook including, local tips, vouchers and your comprehensive itinerary
- 24/7 phone support during your trip

Not included

- Lunches (approx. 8 to 10€/pers. for picnic lunches or 15 to 20€/pers. for restaurant meals)
- Dinners Days 5, 6, 7 and 8 (approx. 20 to 25€/pers.)
- Accommodation on Day 8
- Fuel and parking costs
- Transfers to collect/drop-off your vehicle
- International flights
- Repatriation insurance
- Museum entry fees

Additional Options

- Double room supplement in Gîte accommodation (3 to 4€/pers. per night, subject to availability)
- Single room supplement in hotel accommodation (prices vary, subject to availability)

Notes

For vehicle collection and drop-off you have the choice between the airports of St-Denis, St-Gilles-les-Bains or St-Pierre.

Terms and conditions

Booking conditions

Booking a trip with Altaï Réunion 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 35% of the total price to complete their booking. Payments can be made online or by bank transfer. You will receive an e-mail with your booking confirmation.

Invoice procedure

Once your booking is confirmed you will receive an invoice by e-mail. The full balance of the trip must be received at least 35 days before your departure date. Altaï Réunion reserve the right to cancel your booking, free of charge, if this deadline is not respected.

Cancellation policy

If for any reason you have to cancel your trip, we require written confirmation of your decision. 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: a sum of €50 per person will be retained
- Cancellation received 30 to 21 days before the departure date: your deposit, 30% of the total trip price will be retained

- Cancellation received 20 to 14 days before the departure date: 50% of the total trip price will be retained
- Cancellation received 13 to 7 days before the departure date: 75% of the total trip price will be retained
- Cancellation received less than 7 days before the departure date: 100% of the total trip price will be retained

Special cases:

Please note that, regardless of the date of cancellation or modification if you have agreed to pay for services such as hotel reservations, flights or additional activities, these services are usually non-refundable so additional fees may apply.

- Fixed airfares: if your airline ticket was issued in advance, often done to avoid significant surcharges, you will be charged 100% of any non-refundable fees if you wish to change or cancel your flight plan.
- Fixed in-country costs: early charges for firm bookings will be charged if you cancel or modify your trip.
- Insurance costs: if you have taken out comprehensive or cancellation insurance, the cost of insurance is due and cannot be refunded.

Please note that fees apply according to the date we receive your cancellation or modification request in writing.

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. Altaï Réunion reserve the rights to cancel departures due to exceptional circumstances which may impact the safety of participants. Such circumstances 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 Altaï Réunion 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 and all of the prices we advertise are accurate when published. Altaï Réunion reserve the rights to make changes to any of these prices. Before you make a booking we will give you the up-to-date price of your chosen holiday including any supplements, upgrades or additional activities you may have requested. If the number of travellers is fewer than the indicated number of participants on the website, a small group surcharge may be applied. For all of our trips we include details of services, prices and what is/is not included but please be aware that changes to the prices may be necessary in accordance with exchange rates or price changes of various components of the journey.

Contract transfer

If you are unable to travel with Altaï Réunion 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

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

This trip is not necessarily a guided adventure. You will be provided with a vehicle, an Altaï Reunion Roadbook and 24/7 phone support throughout your trip.

Food

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 during your stay to carry with you each day. These 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 provided in your gîte accommodation and available to purchase at hotel restaurants. 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 'trail food' before your trip to bring with you. We also advise 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

This trip includes 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.

This adventure also includes 2* or 3* comfortable hotel accommodation for some nights, including in Cilaos, to maximise your comfort.

Transportation

You will be provided with a rental car, minimum category B.

Basic third party insurance is included with a deductible of around 800 € in case of theft or accident, amount varies depending on vehicle model and rental period. We strongly advise that you take out additional 'rachat de franchise' insurance to reduce or cancel the deductible amount in case of theft or accident. This must be purchased from the rental company at the time of hiring and costs around 100 € for 10 days.

Most of the towns and settlements on Réunion Island are connected by a network of roads. The Cirque de Mafate is only accessible by foot, to explore this area we suggest leaving your vehicle in Cilaos or the Col de Boeufs car park. This car park is guarded and costs around 10 € a day, payable locally. Roads are generally in good condition but some, notably in the mountains, have steep slopes and sharp turns. These roads require careful driving, especially in the rain.

IMPORTANT: To rent a vehicle you must be at least 21 years old. Do not forget your drivers license or credit card. A drivers

license per driver and a credit card in the name of a driver are required.

Additional Options (prices may vary)

- Additional driver, from 50 €/rental
- Child seat, from 30 €/rental
- GPS, from 30 €/rental

Budget & exchange

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/site entry fees and other personal expenses. Please be aware that hot showers are not always free.

Tips

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

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

Helpful equipment

- 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. 2 litres, 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

Please bring two bags:

- A rucksack (35-40L or 45-50L) for use as a day bag when hiking. This will contain your (vital) personal belongings for the day, or sometimes for several days.
- A larger bag (60-80L) containing the rest of your belongings, those which you do not need with you in the daytime.

Medicine

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

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

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

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

Health information & recommendations

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

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 March, 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 March - the hurricane season which brings heavy rainfall and trekking is disrupted.

Electricity

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

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

Surface area: 2,512 km²

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

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

