altaï DMC La Réunion
+33 4 12 28 01 50

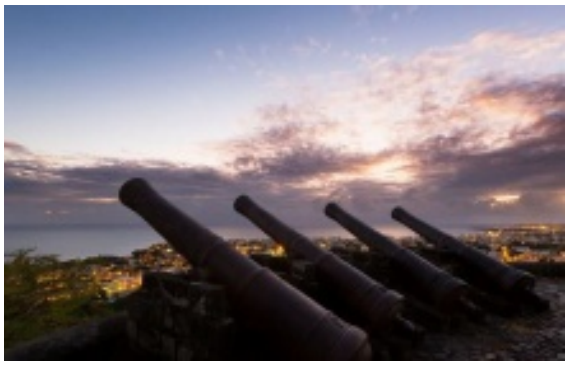
CIRQUES, PITONS AND THE WILD SOUTH

This trip is for those who want to discover all of Réunion Island from its well-known highlights to its hidden facets. During these 10 days, you will have the chance to explore tiny Créole villages nestled in the heart of the cirques de Salazie, Mafate and Cilaos. Enter the volcanic world of the Piton des Neiges and the Piton de la Fournaise and journey to the secret centre of the island through lava tubes. A complete and original itinerary designed to showcase the cultural, historical and geological phenomena which today make la Réunion the paradise it is.

Region	Cilaos Mafate Piton de la Fournaise Piton des Neiges Salazie
Activity	Hiking Volcanoes & Lava tubes
Duration	12 days
Group	4 to 12 people
Code	QREU2-EN
Price	From €1,950
Level	3/5
Comfort	3/5
Language(s)	English

ITINERARY

Day 1 **Saint-Denis**



Welcome to Réunion Island! Meet your group and guide at St-Denis. Evening meal at leisure.

Accommdoation: Hôtel

Day 2 **St Denis - Cirque de Mafate - La nouvelle**

Morning transfer from Saint-Denis along an aptly named forest road, the 'Hauts de Mafate' or the 'heights of Mafate'. Todays 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 to 4 hours of walking
Elevation: +200m/-610m
Accommdation: Gîte
Night without luggage - you will be reunited with your bags in Cilaos on Day 4.

Day 3 **La nouvelle - Trois Roches - Marla**

Discover Trois Roches and a surprising waterfall top view of the river and its distant, inaccessible waterfalls. With this angle overlooking the riverbed it is easy to imagine how the stream can transform into a torrent during cyclonic flood. Explore volcanic features at the base of a 1000m cliff which forms the cirque and follow the riverbed up to the delightful settlement of Marla (1630m).

4 hours of walking
Elevation: +660m/-460m
Accommodation: Gîte
Night without luggage - you will be reunited with your bags in Cilaos tomorrow.

Day 4 **Marla - Col de Taibit - Cirque de Cilaos**

Today we hike through the col du Taïbit (2083m), the passage which links the Cirque de Mafate to the Cirque de Cilaos. The views from up here do not disappoint, on a clear day you can expect a spectacular display of the surrounding cirques, the south coast and Grand Bénare volcanic peak. The route continues down through the thick vegetation of the 'Bois des Couleurs' to Cilaos. From here, it is a 15 minute local bus to our hotel accommodation.

3 - 4 hours of walking
Elevation: +500m/-880m
*Accommodation: Hôtel 3**
Your bags will be waiting for you.

Day 5 **Cilaos - Refuge du Piton des Neiges**

The shaded path up to tonights refuge is steep. Along the way there are many beautiful view points to admire Cilaos from. The climb continues up to rewarding views and around 2500m of altitude where our accommodation awaits... For those who do not wish to climb the volcano and would prefer to spend more time relaxing, it is possible to stay an extra night in the hotel in Cilaos (this can be arranged with your guide).

5 hours of walking
Elevation: +1150m/-50m
Accommodation: Refuge
Night without luggage - you will be reunited with your bags tomorrow.

Day 6 **The Piton des Neiges - Cilaos**

Nightime departure for the summit of the Piton des Nieges at 3070m above sea level, the highest point in the Indian Ocean. The views from here are truly amazing and, as your surroundings are illuminated by the first glow of the morning sun, we are sure you will agree that this is a very special place. Return to the refuge for breakfast. This afternoon is devoted to a well deserved relaxation session.

5 to 6 hours of walking
Elevation: +600m/-1700m
Accommodation: Hôtel
Your lugagge will be waiting for you.

Day 7 **Cilaos - Grand Bassin**

Bus transfer to the start of our hike to the isolated village of Grand Bassin. This village has been largely deserted by its inhabitants who left in search of a more comfortable city life. A fabulously authentic Créole haven remains, only accessible by foot, it is one of the most beautiful hidden areas of the island. Discover stunning landscapes and enjoy the tranquility of this peaceful village surrounded by rivers, waterfalls and valleys.

2 hours of walking
Elevation: +160m/-680m
Accommodation: Local gîte
Night without luggage - you will be reunited with your bags on Day 9.

Day 8 **Grand Bassin - Plaines des Cafres - the Piton de la Fournaise**

Today we leave the peaceful paradise of Grand Bassin and head back accompanied by the sound of cascading waterfalls. Flowers and fruits of all kinds grow here like loquats, jackfruits, papayas and anthuriums... We reach the alien Plaines of Cafres and the volcanic massif of Piton de la Fournaise. On the way, we can visit the Volcano House museum (optional, payable locally).

2 to 3 hours of walking
Elevation: +680m/-160m
Accommodation: Gîte
Night without luggage - you will be reunited with your bags tomorrow.

Day 9 **The Piton de la Fournaise - Bélouve**

Today we are in for a treat exploring one of the most active volcanoes in the world, the Piton de la Fournaise. Climb the main crator and discover a rich world of strange colours, surprising minerals and warped shapes with fumaroles and sulphur revealing glimpses of the intense activity of this unique sheild volcano. Afternoon transfer to Bélouve.

5 to 6 hours of walking
Elevation: +630m/-630m
Accommodation: Gîte
Your lugagge will be waiting for you.

Day 10 **Bélouve - Forêt de Bébour - Trou de Fer - Hell Bourg**

Today we explore Réunion Islands old-growth rainforests. The enchanting primary forest of Bélouve is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna including 'fanjans', tree ferns and famous giant tamarins. Discover the Trou de Fer (Iron Hole) Canyon, an impressive chasm in the heart of the tropical forest of Bébour where waterfalls tumble to impossible depths of 300m... To venture into Bébour forest is to venture into a world of legends, let your imagination to go wild in this captivating world of tortuous trees. Night in Hell Bourg.

5 hours of walking
Elevation: +160m/-730m
Accommodation: Gîte
Your lugagge will be waiting for you.

Day 11 **Hell Bourg - Côte Est - Saint Gilles**

This morning, we head towards the east coast of the island. Today is dedicated to discovering traditional vanilla farms, sugar cane fields and the ancient lava tubes of the Piton de la Fournaise. A specialist guide, an expert in volcanism, will lead us on an underground adventure through lava tubes... Equipped with a helmet and head torch to unlock a mysterious and beautiful hidden universe... A fantastic end to our trip. Transfer to St-Gilles.

Accommodation: Hôtel

Day 12 **St-Gilles**

End of our trip.

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.

DATES & PRICES

International departures:

No departure for now

Trip code: QREU2-EN

Included

- Full supervision by an experienced English-speaking professional Guide
- 8 nights' Gîte accommodation with shared facilities
- 4 nights' hotel accommodation
- Full board from breakfast Day 2 to lunch Day 12 excluding dinner Day 11
- All in-country transfers, as detailed in itinerary
- Lava tube exploration supervised by a qualified specialist
- Vanilla farms visit
- Luggage transportation as detailed in itinerary
- Secure baggage storage

Not included

- Meals on Day 1 and an evening meal on Day 11
- International flights
- Transfer to meeting point in St-Denis on Day 1
- Repatriation insurance

Additional Options

- Volcano House museum visit (optional, payable locally)
- Small group option for 2-3 participants: prices vary
- Visit to Folio Maison in Hell Bourg

Terms and conditions

Inscription

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 30% 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.

Facturation

Once your booking is confirmed you will receive an invoice by e-mail. The full balance of the trip must be received at least 30 days before your departure date. Altaï Réunion reserve the right to cancel your booking, free of charge, if this deadline is not respected.

Annulation

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.

Modification du contrat

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.

Prix et révision des prix

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.

Cession du contrat

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 advice 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

Armed with an abundance of experience and a wealth of knowledge, our professional guides are all experts in their domaine. Our qualified leaders are all English speaking, all practicing outdoor practitioners and they are all besotted the magnificent Réunion Island. Your guide will be assisted by one of Altaï Réunions trusty drivers, responsible for transfers and luggage transportation.

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:
Picnic lunches will be provided each day. These will include fresh seasonal produce, cheese, meat, salad and fruit. Please be aware that you will be expected to carry your lunch and water with you each day.
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.

Please let us know about any dietary requirements when you book the trip and we will work with you to cater for your needs.

Accommodation

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.
This trip also includes hotel accommodation for additional comfort.

Transportation

In-country travel and baggage transfer by private minibus.

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 drinks, tips 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.

Supplied equipment

If you choose to participate in any of the outdoor activities, all technical equipment will be provided.

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 equivilent (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 (or appropriate trail running shoes)
- A pair of trainers or equivilent casual shoes for the evenings
- Thick walking socks
- Warm gloves, hat and scarf (forJune - September trips and 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

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.
- A larger bag (60-80L) containing the rest of your belongings, those which you do not need with you in the day. 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 is a soft bag like a ruckack or holdall rather than a hard cased suitcase because it is more practical for our drivers.

Medicine

Your guide is a trained first-aider and will carry a full first aid kit at all times during the trip. 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 vaild 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 Hepatitus 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 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

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 responsable 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, moves stones etc..
- Exchanges are prefarable to donations - generations gifts can destabalize 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

OCEAN
INDIEN
St-Denis
St-Gilles
Cirque de Salazie
Cirque de Mafate
Trou de Fer
St-Benoît
La Nouvelle
Hell-Bourg
Belouve
Marla
Col du Taibit
Piton des Neiges 3069 m
Cirque de Cilaos
Grand Bassin
Cité du Volcan
Tunnel de lave de 2004
Piton de la Fournaise 2631 m
St-Pierre
Producteur de vanille
VÉHICULE
MARCHE