

THE CRÉOLE HIKE

This 7 days hike through the island makes you discover the essential of Réunion. You will cross the 3 cirques : Cilaos and its high peaks, Mafate, the wildest and most isolated of thr three and Salazie with its waterfall and exuberant vegetation. We discover creole culture and history around the timeless and charming villages we cross. The last days are devoted to the discovery of Piton de la Fournaise, one of the most active volcanoes in the world and the mysterious Bélouve forest.

 Region	Cilaos Mafate Piton de la Fournaise Salazie
 Activity	Hiking
 Duration	7 days
 Group	4 to 12 people
 Code	QREUD-EN
 Price	From €1,245
 Level	3/5
 Comfort	3/5
 Language(s)	English

ITINERARY

Day 1 Saint Denis - Col des Boeufs - La Nouvelle (Cirque de Mafate)



On arrival, we are greeted by our guide at the airport before joining the Cirque de Salazie. We are driven to the Col des Boeufs. After a good picnic, we are preparing our backpack to go spend 3 days and 2 nights in the famous Mafate cirque (we will collect our luggage in Cilaos). Our hike starts easily and we enter in the Mafate cirque by the Col des Boeufs. There is no road access to this cirque, isolation and tranquility are guaranteed!

3 hours of walking

Elevation: + 150m / -500m

Accommodation: Gîte

Day 2 La Nouvelle - Marla (Mafate)



We hike in the heart of the Mafate cirque, between the villages of La Nouvelle and Marla. Arrival in Marla for a last night in the Mafate cirque. Tomorrow we will pass the Col du Taïbit to enter in the Cilaos cirque.

4 hours of walking

Elevation: + 600m / -400m

Accommodation: Gîte

Day 3 Marla - Col du Taïbit - Cilaos



This morning we leave Marla in direction of Cilaos cirque. We cross the Col du Taïbit which is the only way to link those two cirques. From the pass we enjoy a beautiful view on Cilaos and the South coast on one side and on Mafate and its villages and peaks on the other side. After the long way down to the Ilet à Cordes road we take a small bus to the village of Cilaos. We collect our luggage and we settle in our hotel. The opportunity to rest while taking advantage of the hotel's infrastructure.

4 to 5 hours of walking

Elevation: + 450m / -820m

Accommodation: Hotel with swimming pool

Day 4 East coast : Producer of vanilla and lava tube - Plaine des Cafres



This morning, we take the direction of the east coast of the island. Today program : discovery of a renowned producer of vanilla, fields of sugar cane, lava flows from Piton de la Fournaise. We continue our day with the visit of a lava tube (depending on weather conditions and seismic activity, access may be prohibited to visitors). In the afternoon, we reach the Plaine des Cafres.

1 hour of walking

Accommodation: Gîte

📍 **Day 5 Piton de la Fournaise - Cité du Volcan - Gîte de Bélouve**



This day is dedicated to the Piton de la Fournaise. We start from the Pas de Bellecombe, which gives us a superb panorama of the Piton de la Fournaise. The hike start with a short way down to enter the Enclos Fouquet. It's a 5000 years old caldeira, resulting of a huge collapsing. The landscape is totally mineral from this point. We explore the enclosure and cross all kinds of amazing rock manifestations. Return to the Pas de Bellecombe. We leave the volcano to discover its Museum: the Cité du Volcan. We are going to learn more about it and the volcanic universe of the island in general. Direction Bélouve and its gîte in the heart of the endemic tropical forest. A mystical atmospheres is reigning around here

NB: In the event of a volcano eruption, alternative hikes in the area are offered.

3 to 4 hours of walking

Elevation: + 150m / -150m

Accommodation: Gîte

📍 **Day 6 Forêt de Bélouve - Trou de Fer - Saint Gilles les bains**



Early departure for the primary forest of Bélouve. We cross this forest and immerse ourselves in a wet tropical forest typical of the height of Reunion Island. We are surrounded by fern trees and an endemic vegetation. The tortuous trees give to this place a magic atmosphere. Then we arrive at a belvedere on the highest waterfalls of France : le Trou de Fer. Return to Bélouve and direction Saint-Gilles for a moment of rest near the lagoon. Dinner at leisure.

3 hour walk

Elevation: + 160m / -160m

Accommodation: Hotel with swimming pool

Dinner at leisure

📍 **Day 7 Saint Gilles - Free day**



Free time by the lagoon to enjoy the most beautiful beach of Reunion Island. Possibility of many optional activities from Saint-Gilles: whale watching from June to October, helicopter, ULM, paragliding, canyoning ...

Meals at leisure

Notes on the trip:

The program was established according to the last elements known at the time of its writing; imponderables are always possible and situations beyond our control can modify the course. Depending on the weather and operational conditions, your management team reserves the right to modify this itinerary in order to best ensure the progress of the stay and your safety. Always for security reasons, the management and the organization reserve the right to interrupt your participation if your technical level and / or your physical form do not correspond to those required. In no case will this interruption give rise to a reimbursement or payment of compensation.

Safety instructions :

Your stay starting with a short hike to the Cirque de Mafate, you will absolutely have to wear compression stockings for the duration of your Paris - Reunion flight. You will also need to remember to keep yourself well hydrated and to eat properly.

DATES & PRICES

International departures:

No departure for now

Trip code: QREUD-EN

Included

- Full supervision by an expert qualified guide
- 4 nights gîte accommodation with shared facilities
- 2 night in hotel accommodation
- The visite of Museum (Maison Folio, Cité du Volcan, producteur de vanille)
- Exploration of a lava tube supervised by an expert qualified guide
- Full board from lunch Day 1 to breakfast Day 7
- All in-country transfers as detailed in the itinerary
- Luggage transportation as detailed in itinerary
- Secure baggage storage

Not included

- Breakfast Day 1 & dinner Day 7
- International flights
- Repatriation insurance

Additional Options

Small group option for 2-3 participants: prices vary

Notes

For many years, we have put our experience at the service of travelers from different backgrounds. You can therefore find in your groups participants from our different partners.

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 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

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 on the final night to maximise your comfort.

Transportation

In-country travel and baggage transfer by private minibus.

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

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.

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 (or appropriate trail running shoes)
- 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

- 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 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 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

Altai 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 Altai 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



— VÉHICULE
 - - - - MARCHÉ