

# THE 'DIAGONALE DES FOUS' TRAIL

Follow the *Diagonale des Fous*, a trail which literally translates as 'the diagonal of crazy'. A large part of this 147 km long route (+9300m / -9900m) is shared with that of the, Ultra-Trail World Tour listed, Grand Raid race. You will be accompanied by our qualified mountain guide and trail teacher, Thierry, a former winner of this demanding race - a true expert with plenty of knowledge and advice to share. Explore the beautiful island of Réunion via an assault course of steep paths and live your trail running passion for a full 5 days. A unique chance to complete one of the most challenging trails in the world at the same time as benefitting from Thierrys quality coaching.

 Region	Cilaos Mafate Piton de la Fournaise Salazie
 Activity	Trails
 Duration	5 days
 Code	QRUNTRFITALT
 Price	From €1,990
 Level	5/5
 Comfort	3/5

# ITINERARY

## Day 1 Montvert les Hauts - Bourg-Murat



Welcome to St-Pierre, the departure point of the Diagonale trail (version 2017). From here we will complete the first 13 kilometres to Monvert Les Hauts by vehicle. Now your trail begins, today's route leads you to la Plaine des Cafres plateau along high cliffs with a number of fabulous view points overlooking the South of the island. After a passage to the Nez de Bœuf peak, you reach Bourg Murat and your accommodation for the night.

Distance: 37 km

Elevation: + 2100m/-1100 m

Accommodation: Gîte or mountain refuge

Luggage transportation included

## Day 2 Bourg-Murat - Cilaos



From the village of Bourg Murat, your journey continues past the muddy Mare à Boue to Kerveguan hill. The route then dips down along a steep path in the Cirque de Cilaos. This afternoon, Thierry has a video to share along with some accompanying slices of wisdom about the latest Grand Raid race.

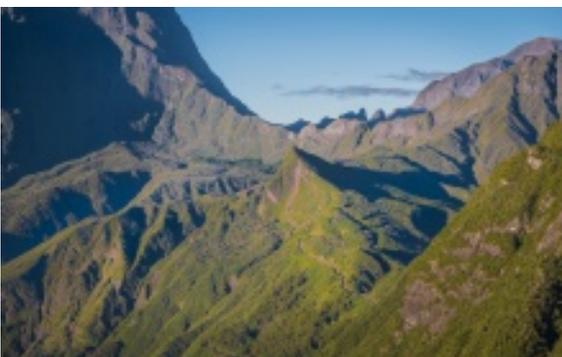
Distance: 17 km

Elevation: +800m/-1200 m

Accommodation: Gîte or mountain refuge

Your luggage will be waiting for you

## Day 3 Cilaos - Grand Place



Departure from Cilaos, across Bras Rouge river (red arms river) and up the steep Taïbit col (2 070 m), a must-visit pass between the cirques of Cilaos and Mafate. Venture into the atypical forest of le Plaine des Tamarins and pass through the col des Bœufs for a short visit in the cirque of Salazie. Return to Mafate by the Scout trail, a path which, in the true spirit of Réunion Islands mountains, resembles teeth, alternating between steep uphill and downhill sections. Arrival at Grand Place village to finish today's leg of the journey.

Distance: 31 km

Elevation: +2200 m /-2800 m

Accommodation: Gîte

Night without luggage - you will be reunited with your bags tomorrow at Dos d'Âne

## Day 4 Grand Place - Dos d'Ane



Leave Mafate via a long, demanding path which rises up to Maïdo (2050m). From here it is a long route down to the river of Galets. Cross the river and push through the last few uphill kilometres to Dos d' Ane...

*Distance: 32 km*

*Elevation: +2800m /-2800 m*

*Accommodation: Gîte*

*Your luggage will be waiting for you*

#### Day 5 **Dos d' Ane - St-Denis**



The last leg of our journey leads to the capital city of Réunion Island, St-Denis. The downhill Kalla path from Dos d'Âne leads to the coast, where the air is noticeably warmer creating a different challenge! The route continues along the Chemin des Anglais (the path of the English), a registered historic monument. Today you complete one of the most demanding long-distance trails in the world.

*Distance: 30 km*

*Elevation: + 1350m/-2000m*

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 the group or yourself. 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:



### Price

**From 1190 € 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

- 4 nights gîte or mountain refuge accommodation with shared facilities
- Half-board from dinner Day 1 to breakfast Day 5
- All transfers as detailed in itinerary, in private vehicles
- Luggage transportation
- Secure baggage storage
- A detailed roadbook including, local tips, vouchers and your comprehensive itinerary
- 24/7 phone support during your trip

### Not included

- International flights
- Lunches (approx. 8 to 10€/pers. for picnic lunches or 15 to 20€/pers. for restaurant meals)
- Dinner on Day 5 (approx. 20 to 25€/pers.)
- Transport to St-Pierre to meet on Day 1
- Repatriation insurance

### Additional Options

Please let us know if you would like to reserve any of the following:

- Hotel accommodation in Cilaos and la Plaine des Cafres (prices vary, subject to availability)

### 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***

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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**

This trip will be supervised by Thierry Chambry, an expert Mountain Guide, former winner of the Grand Raid race and qualified trail teacher. He will be assisted by a trusty driver, responsible for escorting people and luggage.

### **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 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 digestif 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**

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**

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 of 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 lunches, drinks, tips, bus tickets, museum 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***

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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 (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***

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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. 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***

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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 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***

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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***

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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 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**

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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.