

# REUNION

Updated : 01 AUGUST 2012



## QUESTIONS + ANSWERS

### ABOUT THE ISLAND OF REUNION

Lying 150 kilometres south west of Mauritius and 750 kilometres east of Madagascar, this volcanic island enjoys a temperate climate, with ideal weather conditions through most of the year.

At the centre of the island are three gigantic basins: Mafate, Cilaos, and Salazie resulting from enormous collapses, and constitute one of the island's major attractions. Surrounded by walking paths, they offer nature lovers a spectacle of wooded gorges and extraordinary waterfalls.

Reunion offers an incredible diversity of countryside, luxuriant vegetation bathed in tropical heat, rocky landscapes invigorated by the mountain air or heavenly turquoise waters... its natural charms leave nobody indifferent.

### HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FLY THERE?

Air Mauritius flies directly to Mauritius, a journey of approximately 8 hours ex Perth, (connections available from many Australian cities). Reunion is a further 40 minutes flying time.

### WILL WE BE MET AND TRANSFERRED?

Yes, where transfers have been included in your arrangements, our operator (Mille Tours) will have their representative meet you on arrival and transfer you to your hotel.

### TRANSFER TIME

You may be surprised to know that Reunion is a larger island than Mauritius and that it will take around 15 minutes to get to Saint Denis hotels, 45-60 minutes to L'Hermitage-les-Bains on the west coast and up to 90 minutes to reach resorts on the south coast.

### OFFICIAL LANGUAGE/S

Creole is still used but the official language is French, spoken by the vast majority of the population as Reunion Island remains under French rule. English is not widely spoken at all and it is strongly recommended that the more adventurous are able to communicate in a satisfactory level of French when on their travels around the island.

### SEASONS

*Winter:* May to October

*Summer:* November to April

Climate is tropical, but temperature moderates with elevation; cool and dry from May to October, hot and rainy from November to April

### THE PEOPLE

Reunion has over 700,000 inhabitants of diverse and often multiple origins from France, Madagascar, India, Asia and Eastern Africa. Today, the faces of the Reunionese reveal a mingled beauty in all its diversity, they reveal the origins of their ancestors and bring the island's harmonious lifestyle and history to mind.

### THE FOOD

The Reunionese cuisine is as intermingled as the population. No dish has kept its original flavour; all have been enriched and livened up by the generous inspiration of Bourbonese cooks and influences from elsewhere, French, Indian, Chinese... Dishes from each of these countries can sometimes be found in the same meal.

With the increase of European tourists good restaurants have multiplied to satisfy the needs of these visitors. In the area of gastronomy, Reunion has an exceptional status. The multi-ethnicity of the population brings a touch of all flavours to the cuisine and "word of mouth" often works much better than the best western food guides

### WHAT IS THE CURRENCY?

Being part of the European Union, the local currency is EURO.

### MONEY EXCHANGE AND CREDIT CARDS

Most credit cards have a ready acceptance at resorts and we recommend you use one to pay your hotel account. For general expenditure, we strongly recommend that you bring either traveller's cheques in Euro, credit or Cirrus cards for ATM use as Australian dollars are not widely exchanged at hotels. Bank hours are generally 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday.

### WATER AND ELECTRICITY

Tap water is safe to drink across the island and bottled water is readily available for purchase. Electricity is 220/240 volts alternating current at 50 hertz with the wall plugs taking the same two-pin plugs as France.

### ACCOMMODATION

Reunion is not so famous for its beaches but more so as an exciting adventure destination. For those seeking a beach stay, L'Hermitage hotels on the west coast are the most suitable. A good range of hotels range from 2 to 4 star mainly located in Saint Denis (north), L'Hermitage-les-Bains, Saint Gilles, Saint Leu (west) and Saint Pierre (south).

CONTINUED OVERLEAF...

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### TRANSPORT: HOW TO GET AROUND?

Sightseeing is readily available through our operator, Mille Tours. Otherwise for those with a satisfactory command of French can use public transport (buses), hire cars and taxis (be sure to fix the price prior to departure if no meter) are available.

### WHAT TO DO ON LAND

Reunion is famous for its adventure trails from 1 day to 5 days through the 3 cirques of Mafate, Salazie and Cilaos. Golf, hiking, horse trekking, bike riding & 4x4 trekking are just part of a smorgasbord of adventure activities available. Many sightseeing excursions are available through Mille Tours, with one of the highlights being the "Volcano and Wild South" tour... it's a must!

### WHAT TO DO ON WATER

For experienced or novice surfers, the west coast of Reunion offers everybody a choice of quality surfing spots. With one "must"; the "gauche de Saint-Leu", classified amongst the three best waves in the World... Breathtaking! Many water sports including water skiing, deep sea/game fishing, sailing, sail boarding, canyoning and white water rafting to just name a few are available to the enthusiasts.

### WHAT TO DO IN THE AIR

An absolute must when in Reunion is the helicopter sightseeing trips over the cirques and or volcano. No one should ever leave Reunion without experiencing this most exhilarating excursion. Ultra light and paragliding flights are also available for the not so faint hearted!

### WHAT IS THE DRESS CODE?

Casual during the day-time and smart casual for evening activities. As you would expect, the higher the category of resort, the better the standard of apparel.

### WHAT IS THERE TO SHOP FOR?

The main shopping area is along the Rue Marechal Leclerc and surrounding streets. Get a glimpse of the mixture of races and cultures found on Reunion Island in the shops and numerous street markets selling handicrafts, fruit, vegetables and spices in the Small Market and the local stall-markets of Chaudron, La Source, Camlias and La Petite-Ile.

### NIGHT LIFE AND ENTERTAINMENT?

Hotels generally provide evening entertainment which might include bands, cabaret and sega dancing. A nightlife scene of pubs and nightclubs exist mainly in the Saint-Gilles-les-Bains district.

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