

Module 3

ADVENTURE AND MORE IN REUNION ISLAND



AN ADVENTURE ISLAND

Reunion Island is an island where you can enjoy all sorts of adventures and experiences. The Island offers ultimate excitement on land, in air, on and in water. The unique natural settings, rugged landscapes and the two mountain massifs of Piton de la Fournaise and the Piton des Neiges combined with the effect of trade winds create more than 200 microclimates on the island. Reunion Island is one of the earth's biodiversity 'hotspots' where more than 1600 plant species flourish. These natural settings serve as a backdrop for a choice of safe and accessible sports and leisure activities supervised by officially approved professionals. Sports enthusiasts and amateurs alike looking for a sense of freedom and thrill can opt for a high octane holiday amidst the cirques, tropical forests, plains, waterfalls, rivers, peaks and cliffs. This ultimate island is a paradise for hikers and you can choose whatever you wish: hiking, cross-country biking, recumbent biking or Segways. You can also discover the island on horseback, by quad bike or 4 wheel drive; the trails are suitable for families as well as experienced trekkers. For more of an adrenaline surge, you may climb down the island's beautiful canyons, consider going river rafting, or climbing the Three Salazes ridge. For something more unusual, explore the lava tunnels, or fly over the island by helicopter, by paraglider or in an ultralight craft. La Réunion, seen from the sky, is truly magnificent! Réunion Island also has a coastline with beaches to savour moments of relaxation and a turquoise lagoon where you can safely swim at 27°C. There is something for everyone in the four corners of the island. Its pristine natural reserves and marked trails are accessible to all.

ON GROUND

Hiking

The Reunion Island's innumerable trails are a magnet for trail, hiking and eco-walking enthusiasts. 900 km of marked trails crisscross the island with stopovers at mountain lodges. These include three long trails of which the GR®R1 Piton des Neiges Long Trail has been awarded the favourite hiking trail by the French in 2019. There are also many small hikes that can be done in half a day. Every year, thousands of trail runners from all over the world assemble deep in the National park of the Réunion Island to participate in the various races that comprise the 'Grand Raid', especially the 'Diagonale des Fous' or the 'Madman's Diagonal', a world-famous ultra-marathon, ranked among the 15 most difficult races in the world and chosen as the most iconic extreme trail in the world by L'Équipe magazine in 2019.



Trekking Mafate

© Frog974



Horse riding

Horse riding is an unconventional way to discover the wild and rugged landscapes of the Reunion island. Beginner or advanced riders can explore trails on Meren horses (imported from the Pyrénées mountains) on the Cafres plain, on the volcanic massif, around the Grand Étang lake or in the east of the island.

Cross-country cycling

Reunion Island offers more than 1 400 km of marked cycling tracks, certified by the French Cycling Federation, 7 cross country cycling stations with safety guarantees in place and standardized signboards : the 'Géranium du Maïdo', 'Entre-Deux' and 'Cilaos' stations, 'Goyavier' and 'Volcan' in the Hautes-Plaines, the 'Vacoas' station at Saint-Philippe and 'Vert-Bleue' station at Sainte-Rose.



Bassin Bleu

© Studio Lumiere



Horse riding

© Cedric Etienne

Excursions by 4WD

The mountains in Reunion Island are ideal for excursions by 4 wheel drive and all-terrain buffs will find plenty of adventure at the high altitudes of the island at Dimitile or Cilaos.

Golf

There are three golf courses as of now on the island: The Bourbon golf course at Étang-Salé, the Colorado golf course at Saint-Denis and the Bassin Bleu golf course at Saint-Gilles-les-Hauts.





Waterfall Grand Galet

AERIAL ADVENTURES

Admire Reunion Island differently through:

- Helicopter tours
- Dolphin and whale watching by catamaran
- Canyoning

There is a choice of many excursions. Your clients may choose to enjoy a spectacular view of the island from the sky, from on board a helicopter. Every morning, helicopter flights are available leaving from Pierrefonds airport on the south west coast and from heliports at Saint-Gilles.

Your clients can also go dolphin and whale watching in catamarans (depending on the season). Or think of canyoning for an unforgettable experience. The Cilaos cirque offers one-of-a-kind routes for this activity. Reunion Island is a fascinating destination where all kinds of pleasures come together in an area of 2,500 sq. km. You can take off in a paraglider an ultralight aircraft or a parachute and fly over the breath taking landscapes that span peaks and lagoons. A must-do is to board a helicopter and fly over the island to explore the inaccessible and cherish an exclusive moment. Enjoy the flying experience in Reunion Island with training courses and inaugural flight services accompanied by experienced instructors.



Ulm





Pain de Sucre

© Antoine Melfra

AQUATIC ACTIVITES

Surrender to the joys of the sea in any way you feel like. Contemplate the turquoise lagoon or admire a splendid sunset to get your evening going. From Saint-Gilles in the west to Saint Pierre in the southern part of the island, a wide variety of water sports are organized, from family-friendly activities to original and unique ones: swimming, paddling, transparent kayaking, sailing, snorkelling, boat trips, whale and dolphin watching, deep-sea fishing, scuba diving.

CHALLENGING THE RAPIDS

Activities are on throughout the year like with the frenzy of the cascading rapids and we await your participation. The wilderness of the south and the east are the preferred regions for white-water enthusiasts : canyoning, kayak, canoraft, rafting.

For practical recommendations, itineraries, tour guides, reservations of mountain lodges, please contact the IRT regional information and reservation platform.

An ultimate experience on Réunion Island!

Whatever you are looking for, we offer a range of experiences that you can share as a couple, with friends or family... Feel, taste, move: these experiences will stay with you forever!



Snorkeling

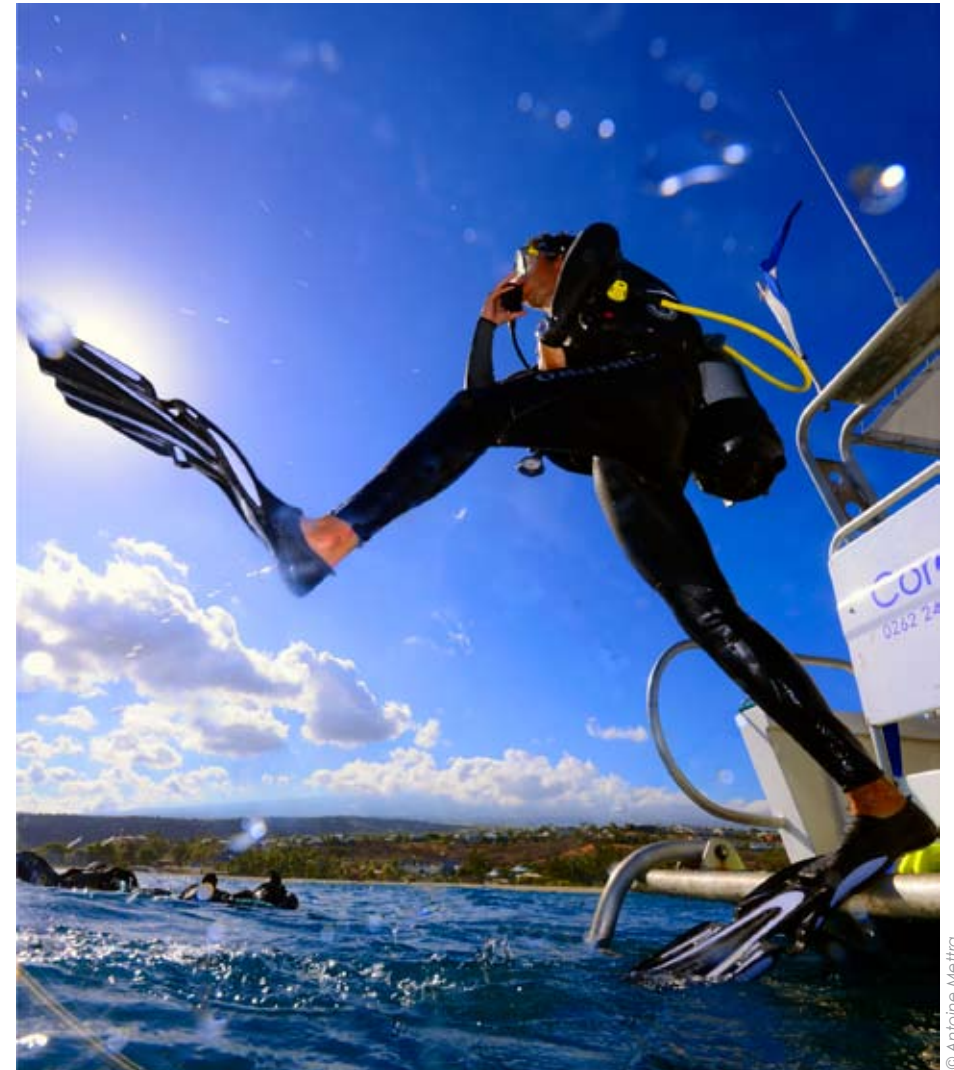
© Laurent Beche



Plunge headlong into an authentic way of life and its incredibly rich cultural melting pot. Discover the distinctive history that shaped the identity of the people in Reunion Island. Take time to stare at the extraordinary panoramas that you will inevitably come across when you are so close to nature. From the lush green interiors to the limpid lagoons, the island is home to a diversity of spectacular landscapes. Are you a thrill-seeking traveller? Then get your adrenaline pumping with offbeat and memorable activities in the heart of nature! Share unusual, exclusive and extraordinary moments that will leave you with unforgettable memories...

Réunion Island offers a wealth of experiences and emotions!

- Explore the soul of our traditions with "Local stories", authentic experiences that reflect the local way of life. You have a chance to immerse yourself in places steeped in history and meet locals who will share secrets of Reunion Island's heritage with you.
- Explore something ultimate and different with our 'Off the beaten track' experiences. You will enjoy surprising and exciting activities in the midst of nature; experience powerful emotions and unforgettable moments; discover breath-taking landscapes. The liberating sensation is simply overwhelming!
- Leave the mundane behind and let yourself be swept away by an extraordinary world where the unique and the unexpected come together. You will be enchanted by experiences with a 'Touch of fantasy', original offerings that will amaze and surprise you and show Reunion Island in a whole new light.
- From sunrise to sunset, the island keeps unravelling its beauty with its breath taking landscapes. Do make the most of a place where 'Time stands still' to contemplate the majesty of nature and the one-of-a-kind views. Cherish the present moment, at your pace, and allow yourself to be lulled into enchantment by the soft sounds, scents and sprays.



Scuba Diving

© Antoine Meftra



UNIQUE EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITIES

1. 'Touch of Fantasy': Étang-Salé forest on a Segway

One of the most unusual activities at Reunion Island accessible to all is a tour on an all-terrain Segway in the magnificent Étang-Salé forest up to the seaside, organized by Mobilboard Réunion. Leave the mundane behind and let yourself be swept away by an extraordinary world where the unique and the unexpected come together.

Itinerary:

- 0830 or 1400: Meet at the last parking lot after Croc Parc, in the Étang- Salé forest where an instructor-guide will wait for the participants
- 15 min of preliminary orientation on operating the Segway electric scooters so that everyone is confident
- Departure for a 3 hr adventure through tamarind, eucalyptus and latanier palm trees.
- There are many planned halts when the instructor-guide will give explanations on the surrounding flora and fauna as well as on the history of the Reunion island ('bois de senteurs' white fragrant wood, red latanier palms, flamboyant, filaos, Indian tamarinds)
- Ride through black sand dunes, savannah, unspoilt beaches...



Segway Mobilboard



- At the end of the excursion, a cocktail blending Creole flavours and the colours of the seashore will be served to guests in a distinctive setting (Étang –Salé beach). This service is optional.
- Return to the point of departure
- Included: Helmet and headgear (compulsory during the activity), radio-guide, raincoats, organized and guided excursion.
- Optional: Refreshments after the excursion (fresh fruit juice, mineral water, coffee, selection of samosas, 'bonbons piments' and other delicacies of the island: 16 €/pers.

Practical information: <https://en.reunion.fr/our-experiences/l-etang-sale-forest-on-a-segway>

2. 'Off the beaten track': Blue lava tunnel

Go 'off the beaten track' and take part in a way-out escapade with 'Kokapat Rando'. Try out a surprising and exciting activity and come back with unforgettable memories.

Located in a private property, the traveller will discover a magnificently preserved tunnel: the Blue Tunnel. They will be able to see imposing and unique lava sculptures in a perfectly preserved state dating back to 22000 years.

This tunnel is considered as one of the three most beautiful tunnels on Reunion Island not only for the blue and yellow reflections on its walls but also for the incredible number of lava formations that are seen all along the way.



Lava Tunnel

© Louise Camovas



Itinerary:

- 0900 or 1330: Meet at the parking lot of the Pont d'Yves church at Tampon
- Meet Rudy, the caving instructor who discovered this tunnel or one of his qualified colleagues.
- Distribution of equipment (authorized helmet, headlamp, pair of cut-proof gloves, knee support (optional)).
- Short approach step to reach the entrance of the tunnel
- Instructions given to visitors on good practices to avoid damaging the tunnel
- 2.5 hours of exploration in the 'belly of the volcano'
- During the excursion, the caving instructor will give plenty of information on volcanic activity, the Piton de la Fournaise and lava tunnels
- Time for discussion at the end of the excursion, over a drink
- Activity ends at : 1130 or 1600



Milky Way sighting at the Plaine des Cafres

© Luc Perrot

Practical information: <https://en.reunion.fr/our-experiences/blue-lava-tunnel>



3. 'Local stories': Walk along the river

Explore the soul of our traditions with "local stories", authentic experiences that reflect the local way of life with 'Les Aventuriers de l'Est'

By the lush green banks of the Marsouins river, surrounded by litchi orchards, 'Les Aventuriers de l'Est' invites you on a discovery of the Îlet Bethléem, a historically significant site. This former charitable institution of the Sisters of Mary is now a popular destination for walks, picnics and swimming. This tour will acquaint visitors with the tropical landscape of the East Coast, the agricultural heritage of the past and the present, the use of picnic spots in Reunion Island and the history of a forgotten village.

Itinerary:

- 0930: Meet at the parking lot of the Îlet Bethléem at Saint-Benoît.
- Greeting of participants by Geoffrey or any other guide from 'Les Aventuriers de l'Est'
- Departure for a 2.5 to 3 hour walk along the Marsouins river
- Get to know exotic fruits, tropical flowers, medicinal plants along the way
- At the end of the walk, a 'fruity snack' consisting of a tasting of fruits and local delicacies will be served to participants.

It is also possible to organize a Créole picnic on the riverbank for groups of a minimum of 10 guests (additional charges apply)
Included: guided tour, 'fruity snack', tasting of fruits with local delicacies and beverages.

Practical information: <https://en.reunion.fr/our-experiences/walk-along-a-river>



Accrobranching Acroroc Saint Pierre

© Stephane Godin



4. 'Off the beaten track': Fly a paraglider

Take off: 'The pilot, that's me!'

Réunion Island: Discovering the Reunion islands is like the joy of an amusement park open to the vast skies. From the peaks to the lagoons, the islanders freely express their warmth and hospitality. The view over the spectacular landscapes is truly mind-blowing.

Destinations which offer such varied scenery are very rare in the world. Passionate instructors will guide visitors, in pairs, to get over the initial fear and enable them to learn or advance their flying skills.

Itinerary:

- Early morning (timing will be confirmed during reservation), Meet at the club Parapente at Saint-Leu.
- Warm welcome
- A flight plan will be decided with the instructor before take-off
- Transfer to the take-off site
- Distribution of equipment
- When the paraglider is in flight, the visitor will take over the two-seater controls and under the pilot's supervision, They will replicate instructions



Paragliding

© Stéphane Fourmet



- Fly over sugar cane fields as well as the National Botanical Conservatory of Mascarin and, depending on the air mass, fly over the Grande Ravine (very impressive view)
- While still at the controls of the two-seater, the guest will conclude their flight by gliding over the Saint-Leu lagoon
- They will gently land on the seashore which has been specially developed for this purpose
- Return to the club. Discussion over a drink.

The flying experience is an exceptional opportunity for the curious-minded, for those who like to remain active or those who would perhaps like do a training programme. Much more than an unforgettable excursion, it is also a participatory learning experience when explanations on weather studies and places seen during the flight will be provided.

Practical information: <https://en.reunion.fr/our-experiences/flight-with-the-tropicbirds>



Kite Surf

© Jean-luc Allègre



5. 'Off the beaten track' 'Sunset Cruise after beach' – Music and celebration cruise

Round off your weekend in style with an exclusive sunset cruise.

Sunset, lounge music, tapas... a truly unique and passionate experience to indulge in, on board the largest sailing catamaran on the Indian ocean: the Maloya.

Tour itinerary:

- Around 1600 to 1700 (depending on the season): Meet at the 'TITAN' dock of the port, at the Maloya boat's ticketing office.
- Be greeted by the crew of 'Festiyacht de Bourbon' and embark on board the Maloya.
- Proceed to the lounges.
- After safety instructions have been provided and the yacht has left the port, guests can fully enjoy the awesome yacht. They may relax on the 2 trampolines at the fore of the boat or take over the aft of the boat
- A welcome drink will be served to the guests and the 'Sunset after beach' cruise will hit off to the beat of lounge music by a DJ set.
- 1.5 hrs of sailing along the coast at sunset to capture the beauty of the moment
- After sunset, guests can let their hair down in the festive ambiance and make the most of the last hour of the cruise by grooving to the beats of club music.



Cruise Boat Port Est Queen Mary

© Jean Luc Allegre



- Return to port after 2.5 hrs of cruising

This 2.5 hr cruise is the ideal way to bring a grand finale to your weekend, in the company of your family, friends or sweetheart.

-Recommended clothing :

In winter: wear warm clothing

-Information:

Snack service/ bar available on board on chargeable basis.

Outside food and drinks are not allowed on board (except celebration cakes).

The official time of departure will be notified to guests at the time of reservation.

Practical information: <https://en.reunion.fr/our-experiences/sunset-cruise-after-beach>



Pêche Au Gros

© Stéphane Fournier



6. 'Local Stories' the authentic Bourbon vanilla, the queen of flavours

The Vanilla-Bourbon plantation is located deep within a forest on the slopes of Sainte-Rose at an altitude of 300 m. The vanilla that grows here is coveted by great chefs of the culinary world and by connoisseurs. The forest is home to a 12 acre plantation on a protected site with several endemic species growing on a lava flow dating from 1708. Mindful of our planet's environment, vanilla is cultivated with the greatest possible care for nature and the forest.

Tour itinerary:

- 1300 : Meet at the site
- Guests will be greeted by Maryse
- Guests will discover the secrets of vanilla cultivation: plantation of the vine, processing, harvesting of the vanilla bean and the major vanilla crops. The highly prized fruit of this orchid will no longer be a mystery to visitors.
- The visit will continue in the primeval forest where endemic, indigenous and exotic species are found (trees, orchids, ferns and mosses).
- As of today, the Vanilla- Bourbon plantation consists of more than 9000 feet of vanilla, a 200 ft papaya plantation, a 300 ft palm plantation as well as a full-fledged Creole orchard.
- Visit ends at around 1500

Practical information: <https://en.reunion.fr/our-experiences/the-real-bourbon-vanilla>



© Herve Douris

