

EXPLORE!

Reunion and Mauritius

14 days

- Trip code RUM



Reunion and Mauritius

We discover a tale of two islands on this contrasting exploration of Reunion and Mauritius. Volcanic vistas and green fertile calderas are the highlights of rugged Reunion; whilst we uncover a side of Mauritius rarely seen by most travellers. We find an island rich in culture from its colonial past and geographical importance with beaches and marine life to rival the best in the world. We will learn to cook creole food and, explore Mauritian bazaars and star gaze with a local astronomer.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Reunion** - Explore volcanos, calderas and small villages on this little visited island
- ★ **Beaches** - Relax on some of the best beaches on the planet
- ★ **Creole culture** - Learn how to cook creole cuisine in a local restaurant
- ★ **Indian Ocean** - Clear water for snorkelling in protected marine parks
- ★ **Port Louis** - Colonial architecture and culture in the capital of Mauritius

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:**Moderate**

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:**10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Saint-Denis

The trip begins today in Saint-Denis, the capital of the volcanic island of Reunion. A short briefing will take place this evening before finding a spot in the town for dinner.



Accommodation: L'Austral Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Visit a spice plantation and Grand Anse Creek en route to La Plaines des Cafres. Travel along the coast to see the spectacular lava flows; Traditional Creole lunch

We start today with a visit to a family owned vanilla plantation to learn about how the spice is grown on the island. We then move on to 'Anse des Cascades', a small harbor, beautifully surrounded by cliffs and waterfalls, where we will take a short, leisurely walk down to the water's edge. We then continue on to Piton Sainte Rose, a town that was engulfed by lava in 1977, though the local church was miraculously spared, leading the locals to believe in divine intervention. We will visit the church, before continuing along the coastal road to see the spectacular lunar landscapes of the south east coast where the evidence of numerous eruptions can be seen in the form of old lava flows down the mountainside. We will stop here for a photo opportunity with time to admire the black and silver tinted volcanic rock and see where the magma has previously encroached on the coastal highway before flowing into the ocean below. Lunch is served in a local restaurant in Saint Phillippe, where we will find delicious Creole curry, often served with rice mixed with locally grown lentils or beans as well as the chance to try the many flavours of Reunionnias rum. Reunion is a part of France, so they are very proud of their gastronomic culture and we will expect to eat well during our time on the island. This afternoon, we visit a spice plantation, for a guided tour to learn more about the spices, vegetables and plants that can be found on the island. Our final stop today will be at palm fringed Grand Anse Bay. Be sure to keep a watchful eye out as it can be possible to spot whales from the shore and many colourful birds in the tree tops. This evening we will make out way inland up to La Plaines des Cafres to our hotel, where dinner will be included.



Accommodation: Hotel Les Geraniums (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 3 - Discover one of the world's most active volcanoes, Piton de la Fournaise

We are up early today to explore the mighty 'Piton de la Fournaise', the active volcano that spared the church we visited yesterday. We will stop at numerous viewpoints such as Nez de Boeuf (Ox's nose), Plaine des Sables (sand plains) with its lunar landscape and Pas de Bellecombe which offers a fantastic view of the first crater. At Pas de Bellecombe, we will have free time in which we can walk around the well-marked paths or learn more about the volcano in the small visitor center. After our short stop, we will continue on to La Maison du Volcan, a modern, interactive museum in which we will learn all we need to know about volcanoes through films, touch-screen quizzes, models and literature. After lunch in a nearby restaurant, we take a scenic road to the UNESCO listed Cirque de Cilaos. The approach to the caldera has many twists and turns until we start driving past fields filled with colourful flowers, green filled forests and huge waterfalls. On arrival, we will have an orientation drive around the town.



Accommodation: Le Vieux Cep (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

DAY 4 - Spend the day exploring Cilaos

The word Cilaos derives from the Malagasy word meaning 'the place you do not leave'. Today will be a chance to relax and go at your own pace. We will begin the day with an hour's long, easy walk in the dense forest which surrounds the historic spa town, before we return to the town's main street for a brief visit to the 100 year old embroidery house where ladies of the local community are working hard to keep tradition alive. Lunch is included and the rest of the afternoon will then be at leisure to explore the markets, French bakeries or perhaps take another walk in this stunning caldera.



Accommodation: Le Vieux Cep (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Dinner

DAY 5 - Visit the National Botanical Conservatory; Evening in L'Ermitage-Les-Bains

Leaving Cilaos after breakfast we make our way to the National Botanical Conservatory. This conservation area is a 7 hectare park surrounding an old colonial house, created to protect native plants and other species from around the world. Our Explore Leader will guide us around the gardens providing details on different fruits, trees, cactuses, palm trees and birds that are on view. We will also have a chance to walk through the elegant, colonial house before making our way to L'Ermitage-Les-Bains our destination for this evening.



Accommodation: L'Ermitage Boutik Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast and Lunch

DAY 6 - Views over the Cirque De Mafate, fly to Mauritius

We will have a very early start this morning in order to avoid the crowds at Maito Peak, a volcanic peak 2200 metres above sea level. The viewpoint on the rim of Cirque De Mafate looks over the wildest and most inhospitable caldera on the island. Mafate town located in the interior of this caldera is only accessible by helicopter or on foot and during our visit we may see helicopters delivery daily necessities down into the community. The Cirque is completely surrounded by craggy peaks, making it easy to forget one is standing on a small island in the middle of the Indian Ocean. On the way back down we will stop at a tiny, family run geranium distillery to see how some locals still pride themselves in distilling the traditional way. We will have a lunch stop in St Denis, before we make our way to the airport for our flight to Mauritius. Upon arrival we transfer to our hotel in Pointe d'Esny, our home for three nights, the evening is free to relax by the lagoon.



Accommodation: Chantauvent Guesthouse (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Explore an island nature reserve; wander the streets of a traditional fishing town

This morning we take a short boat ride over to Ile aux Aigrettes, a small island 800m off the coast of Mauritius that has been designated a nature reserve. Once on the island one of the expert park rangers will take us on a two hour walking tour and introduce us to the unique flora and fauna of Ile Aux Aigrettes. The tour focuses on the fantastic wildlife conservation work that happens here, including the many rare species of bird that have been reintroduced, as well as giant tortoises and fruit bats. After arriving back to the mainland we will make our way to the small fishing town of Mahebourg. Once the capital of Mauritius, charming Mahebourg harks back to the many different cultures that arrived on Mauritius over years gone by from the bright Indian scarfs being sold on the stalls to the Chinese street food available in the market. Our Explore leader will guide us around the town, to explore the market place, waterfront and the town's church before choosing a local spot for lunch and having some free time to wander around at our own pace. This afternoon we'll return to our hotel with time for a swim or a relaxing walk around to the

public beach.



Accommodation: Chantauvent Guesthouse (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Snorkelling trip in Blue Bay Marine Park; Rest of the day at leisure

Our morning starts with a glass bottom boat trip in the Blue Bay Marine Park. On average the sea is 5 metres deep with crystal clear water making it ideal for snorkelling and offers ample opportunity to admire the colourful and exotic marine life. A mask and snorkel are included on this trip, but if you prefer to use flippers then it is recommended to bring your own. The rest of the day is free to relax by the sea, walk along the beach or explore Pointe D'Esny.



Accommodation: Chantauvent Guesthouse (or similar)



Standard Guesthouse



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Explore the colonial backstreets of Port Louis and drive to the north of the island

Port Louis is a busy commercial town that has retained many beautiful and important colonial buildings. We will visit Fort Adelaide for its views over the Port Louis harbour, the only intact British citadel still standing from the 18th century. We will also visit the bustling, historic Bazaar, which is still as popular as ever with tourists and locals alike and known for its incredible range of fruits, spices and local handicrafts. Whilst walking through Port Louis we will have views of ornately decorated Tamil temples with a backdrop of the Moka Mountain range. For lunch today we sample family style Creole cuisine at a local home. Our destination this afternoon is Trou Aux Biches, where we will have time orientate ourselves with the local area and perhaps enjoy a swim at the long white beach before the sun sets. Weather permitting, this evening a local expert astronomer will join us at our hotel for a fascinating astronomy session. There will be opportunity to view stars, and possibly planets, through a professional telescope as he helps bring the starry sky to life for us.



Accommodation: Le Palmiste (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available

DAY 10 - Visit the Royal Botanical Gardens and an old sugar factory. Afternoon on the beach

After breakfast we make our way to one of the world's best botanical gardens in Pamplemousses. Originally a vegetable garden supplying food to passing ships, it is now famous for the pond covered with giant, Amazonian water lilies measuring over 3 metres in diameter. Another point of interest are the numerous trees which have been planted by famous visitors including presidents, members of the British Royal family and senior politicians from around the world. We then visit an old sugar factory that has been turned into an interactive sugar museum, an important stop to greater explain Mauritius' strong links with the industry and its colonial heritage. This museum takes you through history, explaining the roles of the French and British, the infamous slave industry and the consequential arrival of thousands of Indian contract workers, as well as providing information of the different sugars produced and the growth of technology in the industry. The afternoon is then free to enjoy the beautiful beach.



Accommodation: Le Palmiste (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Discover Cap Malheureux and visit the red-roofed church

We head to the most northern point of Mauritius to visit Cap Malheureux, aptly named 'The Cape of Misfortune' due to the legendary 1810 battle in which the British defeated the French and took over the island. The Cap has panoramic views out to the Indian Ocean and out to the small offshore islands. On the tip of the land, sits the famous red-roofed church, the Notre Dame Auxilliatrice. After some free time to wander on the sand, take photos and dip our feet in the sea, we make our way to Grand Baie for lunch. Grand Baie is predominantly a holiday resort but offers great restaurants overlooking the sea, good street food options and a traditional market area. After returning to the hotel there will be free time to explore or relax by the sea.



Accommodation: Le Palmiste (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Visit Martello Tower and relax on the beach

We check out this morning and transfer to the south of the island, via an 1830's Martello Tower. Martello forts were invented by the British and can be found along coastlines around the world. We will have a guided tour inside this small defense fortification, allowing us to better understand the building style, weapons used and how the soldiers would have lived on a daily basis during this turbulent period. We will spend the last two nights of the trip on the south-west of the island in the small town of Flic en Flac, where we'll find a wide range of places to eat and a beautiful stretch of white sand and crystal clear sea.



Accommodation: Manisa Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - Explore the sacred lakes, tropical forests and Black River Gorge in the south

This morning, we start our tour of the south with a stop at Trou Aux Cerfs, a dormant volcano that offers panoramic views of the island. We then visit the sacred lake of Grand Bassin. This holy site, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is very important for the island's Hindu community, who believe the lake's water comes from the Ganges in India and is also the end point for many pilgrims. A 33 metre tall statue of Lord Shiva looms over the lake and is a busy hangout for the resident monkeys. We enter the tropical forest of Plaine Champagne, stopping at viewpoints overlooking the spectacular Black River Gorges National Park. Our lunch stop is in the Rastafarian village of Chamarel, where we will also visit the amazing site of the Seven Coloured Earth. This natural phenomenon is a landscape of layered, volcanic earth ranging in hues from purples, pinks and reds. After stopping at the Chamarel waterfalls we will make our way along a winding road that unveils the west coast and takes us along the coastal road past many small fishing villages.



Accommodation: Manisa Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



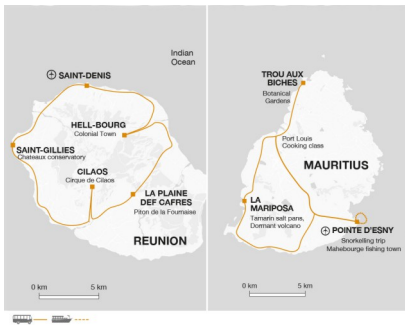
Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 14 - Trip ends in Flic en Flac

This morning our trip finishes after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

This trip is perfect for travellers that want to combine interesting culture, beautiful scenery and a lot of relaxing time on the beach. You will come home feeling relaxed, but with the sense that you have had a real adventure discovering two fascinating islands.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 13
Lunch: 4
Dinner: 3



Transport

Bus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Driver
Explore Tour Leader(s)



Accommodation

3 nights standard guesthouse
9 nights standard hotel
1 nights simple hotel

Trip information

Country information

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Pointe d'Esny: Le Vanille Nature Park - £36 per person (minimum of 5 persons to operate) Afternoon Tea and Cassava Biscuit Tasting - £34 per person (minimum of 5 persons to operate) Trou Aux Biches: Mauritius Aquarium - £32 per person (minimum of 5 persons to operate) Horticultural Gardens and Orchards - £39 per person (minimum of 5 persons to operate) All above optionals need to be prebooked and our local agent will assist with these arrangements. Please note that these activities do not form part of our contracted tour services.

Clothing

Clothing should be lightweight and ideally cotton all year round. Shorts and T-shirts are acceptable everywhere, although take long trousers/skirts for evening wear. Don't forget your swimming costume. For Reunion please have a light cardigan or jacket for the evenings.

Footwear

Lightweight walking bootshoes or trainers are useful for exploring the islands. Sandals for relaxing and beachwear. Rubber soled

footwear for beach walks.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main bag - either a holdall, soft bag or suitcase, plus a daypack.

Equipment

Take a small torch, water bottle, sunglasses, sunhat, suncream, insect repellent, binoculars if planning to birdwatch and a beach towel. Bring a lightweight rainjacket just in case. On Reunion some of the roads are very windy so if you suffer from travel sickness you may wish to bring your usual remedy.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

You should allow £30 for tipping local staff in Mauritius. Whilst on Reunion a tips kitty will not be operated, though you may wish to tip separately at restaurants and to also tip your driver (approx €2-2.50 per person per day).

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

On Reunion we are mainly staying at small guesthouses in picturesque towns. Our hotels in Mauritius are all located close to the beach, and are generally 3 star, most including swimming pools and restaurants.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Reunion: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. Mauritius: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visitors should ensure their passport is machine readable. If you are travelling via South Africa (including transits): From 1st June 2015 South Africa will enforce new immigration regulations effecting all children aged under 18 years that are travelling to, from or via the country. The new laws state that parents and/or guardian maybe requested by the airline and/or South Africa immigration officers to provide additional documentation for each child they are travelling with. Please refer to the South African House website for full requirements: http://outhafricahouseuk.com/visas/vis_forcit.html and your airline for up to date requirements. In order to check in for your flights you must carry full details of your flight itinerary - including all sectors. You will not be able to check in for your flight from Mauritius to Reunion without this.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Included activities

During the trip you will make a short visit to the Carnegie Library in Curepipe. This library is very important to the community and is a source of English novels and childrens books. Many of the books are very out of date and donations of new books are thoroughly appreciated. Even books with damage can still be appreciated as the library has a re-binding machine to make sure everything lasts as long as possible. If you wish to bring books with you your Explore Leader will ensure you can donate them to the library on your trip.
