

LA POSSESSION, REUNION ISLAND

Friday, March 3, 2023

8A-6P



REUNION ISLAND

- Ship will dock at La Possession commercial pier
- Compulsory shuttle to port gate
- Capitol: Saint-Denis, population @190,000
St. Denis is @10 miles/15 min from the port -
On the northwest side of the island
- Nationality: French Overseas Department
- Official language: French
(English NOT widely spoken)
- VISA: none required for US/Canadian/British/Australian/EU citizens
- Currency: euros only. Most shops accept major credit cards

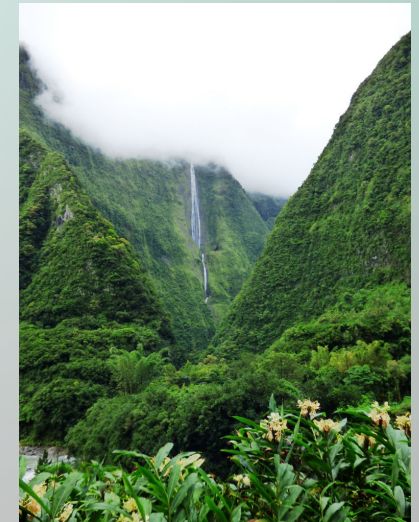


REUNION ISLAND

Population: @868,000



- Population: @868,000
- Geography: 39 miles long by 28 miles wide (970 sq mi)
- Island has several different microclimates due to topography:
Beaches on the west coast, active volcano in the south, rugged mountains and forests in the middle.
- Seasons:
Summer: October-March – rainy, humid season (most rain in Jan/Feb)
Winter: April-September – cooler, dryer season
- Weather in March:
Temp: Avg high 85 F, low 73 F
Rainfall: Between 2-4"/month



REUNION ISLAND

- Safety: Normal precautions
- Internet: Hotels, restaurants, bars, public facilities, cybercafés, media libraries and even some outdoor public areas provide a free wifi connection.
- Cell Service: All major carriers.
- Taxis: Available, but expensive.
- Car Rentals: Available in Le Port (about 4 miles from La Possession), Saint-Denis, and Roland Garros Airport (15 miles/30 min).

REUNION ISLAND: SAINT-DENIS

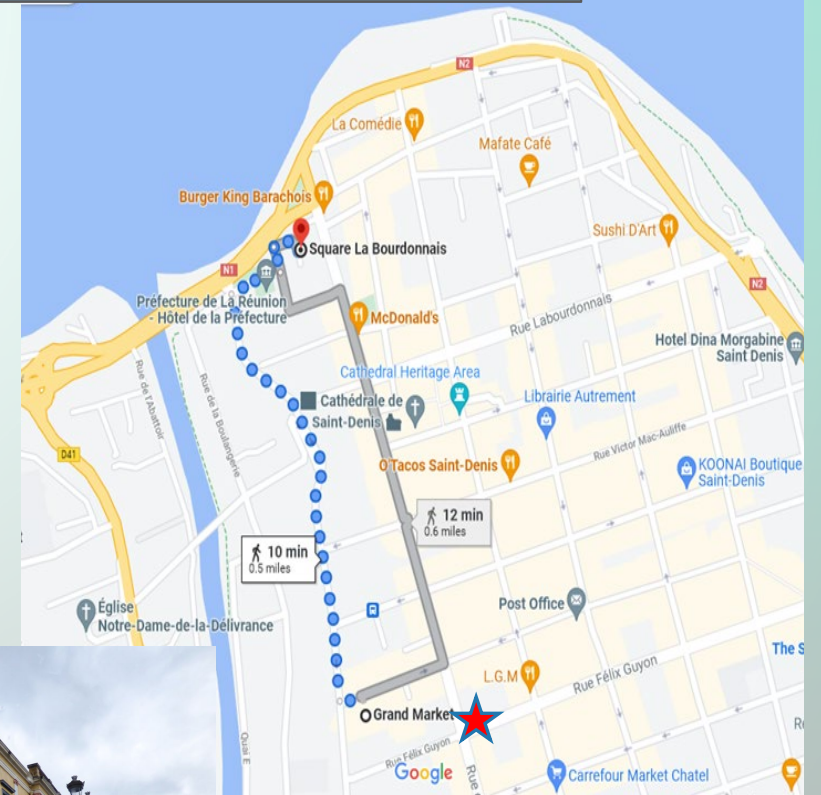
>2018 WC: Courtesy shuttle provided to La Bourdonnais Square in Saint-Denis (@10 miles/15 min from La Possession)

>Tourist Office: On Rue de Paris (★) near Grand Marche

>Things to See/Do in Saint-Denis:

- Grand Marche (Market) - souvenirs
- Saint-Denis Cathedral
- Jardin de l'Étêt (garden and Museum of Natural History)
- Notre Dome de la Délivrance
- Musée Léon Dierx (museum of fine arts)
- Walk Rue de Paris →mansions/government buildings
- Artothèque: Art library in 19thc. Creole mansion

NOTE: Shops may close for lunch 12N-2:30P



REUNION ISLAND

THINGS TO DO AND SEE OUTSIDE OF SAINT-DENIS:

>TOUR ONE OF THE THREE CIRQUES: Cirques are bowl-shaped, amphitheater-like depressions cause by erosion.

“As a volcanic island, the topography of Reunion Island is unique and craggy, with the island's most enticing natural formations being its three cirques, formed as the inside of Piton des Neiges - the volcano that gave birth to Reunion Island - and further shaped by centuries of erosion.” from: www.reunionisland.net/the-cirques

- Circ de Salazie area: Village of Hell-Bourg; dramatic mountain, gorge and waterfall scenery.
- Circ de Mafate area: Lush, green peak with views over the Mafate volcanic crater, Reunion's west coast, and village of St. Paul. *This circ is only accessible by foot or helicopter.*
- Circ de Cilaos area: High mountain creole village of Cilaos. Piton des Neiges - is the highest point in the Indian Ocean. Its pitons, cirques and ramparts are UNESCO World Heritage sites and form a spectacular landscape.

Map of three Reunion cirques



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THINGS TO DO AND SEE OUTSIDE OF SAINT-DENIS:

- Piton de la Fournaise: Active volcano on southeast coast. Erupts about every 9 months. Occupies about a third of the island.
 - Volcano Museum (Cité du Volcan Museum) near the volcano entrance road (in Bourg Murat).
<https://en.reunion.fr/offers/cite-du-volcan-la-le-tampon-en-570267/>

Photo from <https://visit.today/reunion>



Photo from <https://volcano.si.edu/volcano.cfm?vn=233020>



- St. Gilles les Bains: popular seaside resort on the west coast. An aquarium and botanical garden are also located here.
- Vanilla, geranium, cinnamon plantations: see how these are grown and processed into products.

REUNION ISLAND

LINKS TO OTHER TOUR IDEAS:

- www.viator.com/Reunion-Island/d4395-ttd
- www.toursbylocals.com/Reunion-Tours
- www.tripadvisor.com/Attractions-g293826-Activities-Reunion_Island.html

REUNION ISLAND

HAL TOURS:

- SALAZIE & WATERFALLS (8HRS; \$169.95) - ROUGH TERRAIN AND STEPS

- Circle of Salazie, stopping at the vanilla plantation on Mt Roulof
- Bridal Veil Waterfalls photo stop
- Quaint and unfortunately-named village of Hell Bourg (includes lunch)
- St Denis, at the handicraft market.

*I did this HAL tour in 2018
and really enjoyed it*

- WEST COAST & ST GILLES (4.5 HRS; \$109.95)

- St. Paul (former capitol of Reunion), visit Sailors' Cemetery
- Aquarium (located in St. Gilles)
- Time at St Gilles les Bains -- the premier beach resort of Réunion

REUNION ISLAND

HAL TOURS:

- PITON MAIDO (4.5 HRS; \$99.95) - ROUGH TERRAIN AND STEPS

- St Paul, where the first inhabitants of Réunion settled in 1646.
- Viewpoint for the Circle of Mafate -- with its three villages called îlets, accessible only by foot or helicopter.
- Village of La Petite France: geranium-growing district. Visit a geranium oil distillery.

- REUNION'S WILD SOUTH (8.5 HRS; \$79.95) - ROUGH TERRAIN AND STEPS

- Grand Anse Creek with its coconut trees and white-sand beach
- St Philippe -- a city best known for its vanilla and other plant treasures
- Mare Longue Forest reveals its treasures, including spices such as cinnamon, cloves and pepper.
- Cap Méchant. See the high falls of black lava (includes lunch)
- Grand Brûlé area, famous for its lava flows.

REUNION ISLAND

EATS: Food on Reunion is a blend of French, Indian, Chinese = creole.

Specialities

Rougail: Spicy condiment made from tomatoes, lemon and pistachio nuts, as well as the term for various stews (see below).

Rougail saucisses: Full-flavoured stew containing sausage, tomatoes and turmeric, served with rice.

Civet de zourites: Baby octopus cooked in red wine, herbs and spices.

Brèdes: Delicious local vegetable rather like spinach served fried with onion, chilli and ginger as a side dish.

Carri tangué: Curried meat of a hedgehog-like animal.

Achard: Salad of mixed fruits and vegetables.

Cabri massalés: Traditional spicy Indian goat dish straight from the subcontinent and often served on banana leaves.

Zambrokal: Stir-fried rice with beans, peas, meat, sausage, or anything else left in the cupboard.

Gâteau sosso: Sweet cake made from corn.

Bouchons: Dumpling-like wraps filled with pork, beef or chicken and often served as a bar snack.

L'americain: Grilled sandwiches containing meat or fish and cheese, topped with French fries.

Dodo: Officially branded under the name Bourbon, this is the island's favourite lager.

Café Bourbon: Arab coffee.

Rhum arrange: White rum with vanilla, orchids, aniseed and cinnamon.



REUNION ISLAND

LOCAL PRODUCTS:

- Flavored rum (rum)
- Embroidered products
- Locally made oils, soaps, perfumes from geranium, lavender, or myrtle
- Vanilla
- Jams and jellies
- Wines produced in the mountains of Cilaos (Vin de Cilaos).

- Home made “Kayamb”
(Reunion Island musical instrument)
- Sarongs with Reunion Island drawings
- Tablecloths inspired from Malagasy arts
- “Bertel” (a bag made of wicker woven).



GRAND MARCHE: Market has a mishmash of items for sale, including Malagasy wooden handicrafts, fragrant spices, woven baskets, embroidery, T-shirts, furniture and a jumble of knick-knacks.