



Réunion

POP 845,000 / 262

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Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Les Letchis (p266)
- ➔ L'Eveil des Sens – Le Blue Margouillat (p210)
- ➔ Auberge Paysanne Le Palmier (p257)
- ➔ Le QG (p236)
- ➔ Le Saint-Michel (p201)

Best Places to Sleep

- ➔ Senteur Vanille (p200)
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Why Go?

Réunion is one of the Indian Ocean's last great island adventures. The diversity of landscapes is truly astonishing for such a small pocket. Jutting out of the ocean like a basaltic shield cloaked in green, this scenically magical island is a mini-Hawaii. What to expect? Emerald forests, tumbling waterfalls, awesome mountainscapes, twisting roads, soul-stirring panoramas, energetic coastal cities and a sprinkling of white- or black-sand beaches. The formidable Piton de la Fournaise, one of the world's most accessible active volcanoes, adds to the thrill. Small wonder that Réunion is a dream destination for nature and outdoor lovers. Hiking is the number-one activity, but canyoning, paragliding, rafting, horseback riding, diving, whale-watching and climbing are also available.

There's also plenty to compel culture aficionados. Réunion has a fascinating Creole, African, Indian, Chinese and French heritage, with a wealth of architectural treasures and vibrant festivals that are a great occasion to immerse yourself in local culture.

When to Go

- ➔ Réunion's climate experiences only two distinct seasons: the hot, rainy summer from December to April and the cool, dry winter from late April to November. Temperatures on the coast average 22°C in winter and 27°C in summer. In the mountains they drop to 11°C and 18°C, respectively.
- ➔ Peak tourist season is during the French school holidays from July to early September. From October through to the New Year holidays is also busy, but after this everything eases down during cyclone-prone February and March.
- ➔ The drier winter months are the most favourable for hiking, as some of the trails are simply impassable when it's wet. The east coast is considerably wetter than the west.
- ➔ Whale-watching season runs from June to October.



Réunion Highlights

- 1 Plaine des Sables & Piton de la Fournaise** (p236)
Gorging your senses on the Martian landscapes.
- 2 Cirque de Mafate** (p231)
Exploring the topography of these fabulous landforms.
- 3 Cirque de Cilaos** (p217)
Canyoning in this weird-and-wonderful vertical world.
- 4 Le Grand Brûlé** (p258)
Looking out over the barren moonscape of this solidified, pure black lava field.
- 5 L'Hermitage-les-Bains** (p202)
Immersing yourself in the island's steamy nightlife.
- 6 Hell-Bourg** (p227)
Checking out this picturesque town and its appealing Creole houses.
- 7 St-Pierre** (p239)
Discovering the colonial heritage and great nightlife.
- 8 St-Denis** (p182)
Going heritage-hunting among the Creole buildings.
- 9 Piton des Neiges** (p217)
Huffing to the top of for sensational views.