

One Week to Mauritius Island, Shall we?

Let's go! We're back on the road! How nice!! I know, for some people, my life in Reunion Island is like a daily trip/holidays, but no. You mustn't forget that I was working my 35 hours like many people (in France). So yes, there are sunset & Beer on the beach, and bivouac weekends, but these, are not holidays.

I'm talking about going on an adventure to another country, another code... I'm talking about getting out your passport, a small suitcase and stepping onto the airport floor!

Mauritius is only 45 minutes by plane from Reunion Island. You should know that it's the most expensive airline when you consider the distance/price ratio. But if you do it right, it can be reasonable. We paid 260€ for the return trip. Of course, from the mainland, it's another fares. Idea: if you plan to come on holiday to Reunion and you have three weeks, you can imagine doing a few days in Mauritius at the same time!

We had planned to go in December, but Covid forced us to postpone and here we are, the first week of April and it's the holiday! Four of us are going. Three girls and a boy...the poor guy...not at all we were the nicest in the world!

I'm taking you on a week that is the opposite of what a blogger, or even an "instagrammer", would do. You should know that with me nothing is really square or done like in a nice video. No, no, real life! It's better. I couldn't tell you about life in a big hotel for example, but I think I prefer it that way. I would have preferred not to tell you about the rain we had...

We had a few desires and for the rest we let ourselves be guided by the mood of the moment. It should be noted that we arrived in the rain. And yes, we were dreaming of Mauritius in the sun, but we didn't count on this disturbance. Fortunately, we were coming from the next Island.

When we were looking for a place to land, we hesitated. We knew we were going to go further west. As in Reunion, the sunsets are beautiful, the beaches are nice and it's quite central to do activities. In the north there is Grand Bay, the Mauritian "croisette"! There are clubs, bars, restaurants, shops, and beautiful beaches. So, we had to make a strategic choice and you have to know that the Covid passed through there, so we are not in the great tourist era.

I had been told about Flic-en-Flac, a small "town" in the west, as a good choice. We found a small Airbnb here, better situated to move around the island without going round every time. We had one less fact that I hadn't found on any of the blogs or sites, there is a lot of traffic jams. We had rented a car for cheap via a comparison website and picked it up at the airport.

Our flat, in a small residence with pool, private terrace with a view on the mountain side (small mountain) and especially on the whole ocean. The place was a little bit out of town but close enough to walk to, if necessary, about 25 min. You could see the growth of the city with the construction of small housing areas. We arrived of course in the rain... after all the customs and especially covid checks at the airport! Don't minimize the time you could spend in this airport! We found a restaurant and did some groceries before arriving at our flat! We chilled

for a while, took our showers. It was raining but that didn't stop us from going out at the end of the day to see where we could eat.

First nugget, the little restaurant "Canne à Sucre" just at the entrance of Flic-en-Flac. Run by a former commissioner, you are almost in the courtyard of a house, with a bar and some tables. You must make a reservation because she only prepares for reservations. Bingo that evening, four people didn't show up. Fate! Time to get some cash (you can't pay by credit card) and it was time for a good meal.

For 1000 Rupees (about 20 euros) an excellent meal of Creole food. The ti'punch is really good! Ask my friends hihi, yes, I was driving, and I only had one... and the owners are really nice.

On the second day, the weather was not on our side. We went for a run! I promise! except for one of us but no one will be reported here, and we had a nice brunch and stayed in the flat to hang out for a while, each of us doing our own thing.

Sorry, I almost forgot. We did have a home-made brunch, and we had a bottle of red wine...but no corkscrew. How do you do it? After searching the apartment, we found a screwdriver...but our international muscle man managed to drop the cork and the screwdriver into the bottle by only putting a quarter of it next to it...laughter guaranteed!

We had friends to the north. At the end of the day, we decided to go to Grand Bay. If the weather was not good in the west, I don't want to tell you about how much rain we took that evening. We arrived at the N'JOY, a rather posh bar-restaurant which is more of a foot in the sand bar. I think that in other circumstances, without the rain coming from everywhere, we would have enjoyed it a bit more. Nevertheless, the food was good, the cocktails good and the place is still nice, though.

We tried the Casino, which was just next door, all wet from walking through puddles back to the cars. The Casino? I won't mention it because it was disappointing.

The return to the apartment was a bit long but when the owner called us 10 minutes before our arrival to tell us that there was a flood in the corridor (yes, I told you...not at all smooth this artist's life) and that it came from our place I can tell you that nobody was tired anymore.

Indeed, arriving at the flat, water everywhere. Fortunately, not in the rooms, and we hadn't left anything on the floor.

How did a flood happen? Do you remember the rooftop? A few weeks ago, there was some work going on and it seems that the guys had plugged the drain hole with cement... yes yes... and for almost 48 hours, the rain had been building up. We had a private pool up there! hahaha!

In short, with a lot of organization and the help of the neighbour (from Reunion! Island) we managed to blow up the cement to evacuate the water from the terrace and we emptied the water from the living room through the stairs of the building. The owner arrived just in time to finish the job. A funny experience! We were treated to a bottle of rum the next day.

On the third day we finally visited! The weather was still not perfect but there was blue sky and we had come to Mauritius to visit, not stay in our flat, cool as it was. We headed south with a first stop at Grand Bassin (Ganga Talao). Well, the mist and heavy rain of the last few days didn't help to pay tribute to it. But I can tell you that this place of great importance for the Hindu community is impressive. Two large statues, one of Shiva and the other of Ganga at the entrance. You will have other statues of deities at the lake level. It is a very busy place for tourists but when we went there, nobody.

The good thing was that everyone had their own little desire, so we headed for Alexandra falls, our application, Maps.me, took us along a path that was not necessarily practicable and especially not the usual one. We didn't know it yet, but it was for the best. We left our car after a few hundred meters and continued on foot. It was a pleasant walk to Alexandra Falls and its breathtaking view! We all lived in La Reunion, so we are demanding with waterfalls, but the place was really nice.

After that, we went to THE park. You should know that you must pay an entrance fee because there are several possible stops. There is the waterfall, the land of 7 colors, Ebony Forest, the land turtles and even an adventure zone with tree climbing and zip lines. More info on the website: <https://www.chamarel7colouredearth.com/fr> (not great but it will help you anyway)

I might as well tell you that as far as the Cascade is concerned, nothing to say. Nice view, there had been rain the days before, so the flow was good.

Concerning the land of 7 colors, we won't lie to ourselves, when we see on social networks, internet, the pictures we say "Wao". It looks very big, and the colors are fabulous. The reality? there has been so much traffic, and the area wasn't well protected. (Now you can't walk on it or touch it) It's not so huge, you can go around it (or almost) in a few minutes and the colors... they are not so vivid and different anymore.

Well, it's still a beautiful place and nature still shows us that it knows how to be surprising, but I must admit that I was a bit disappointed.

To continue this day, we head for Le Morne area. (The Morne Brabant is the highest mountain here) The hike is not for today! But we took advantage of the nice weather to swim and enjoy the Mauritian beaches.

Here again can I say what I'm thinking? I was surprised to see that the majority (really the majority) of the beaches in the south and the west were taken by hotels, therefore privatized. Am I Naive? maybe a bit but I didn't think so. And then, a beach with a coconut tree? yes it exists but I was struck to see that they are only for hotels. The public beaches are more lined with filaos (It's a kind of tree). It's nice, but not practical, it helps to find shade but it's far from the white sand with coconut trees that we thought. I'm sorry but yes I could be disappointed. On the other hand, the blue water, the sand, all that was great! But I wanted to talk about hotels and their domination of space.

Fourth day, already? Having partied a bit on the rooftop the night before, it was a productive day but to prepare for another trip (the one I'm living as I write this article). We had an aperitif on the beach waiting for the sunset... but still not.

We got a drink at the Mafiozzo, a well-known bar in Flic-en-Flac. The manager, the waiters and even the regulars are nice. We really enjoyed our time there (yes there were several). Well, the cocktails are not crazy, maybe the weak point of the place.

Then restaurant! I can advise you to go to Leslie's without hesitation. A restaurant, existing for a very long time at the entrance of the city where you will be welcomed with kindness. We were finally able to eat lobster, sorry vegetarian friends but it was sooooo good! Really a great time. We met a lonely guy and took him to Mafiozzo for another (last) drink! Was Fun!

Fifth day, we booked a sea kayak to see the Mangroves of Amber Island in the north. Thanks to the young man we met the last night, we learned about the morning traffic hell, so we leave very early. When we get there, the weather isn't great, the water isn't crazy... we hesitate for a long time but Patrick, our guide for the day, seems confident so we go! It was a nice moment with a bit of history, explanations on the flora and some laughs with the kayaks. For 40€, not even that, it was a nice half day to do and less touristy. If it hadn't been so rainy so few past days, the water would have been much nicer, but it's nothing to complain about.

We stopped at the church of Cap Malheureux, under the rain, again... we stopped to eat in a fast-food restaurant in Port-Louis, no need to share the address. The end of the day was rather relaxing at our place.

Day six, Catamaran Day! Let's see the small islands around the big one. Depending on the place, you can see dolphins, turtles, you can dive and see lots of small (and not so small) fishes, they prepare a barbecue for you, you see beautiful water and perfect if you want put your day on instagram. When you put it like that, it sounds like a dream. You just have to write on google "boat trip Mauritius" and you will find all the offers, more or less expensive, long, complete, depending on the island chosen.

We had a friend who had done a great boat trip to Gabriel Island and Flat Island. She had been able to snorkel (with the loan of equipment which is rare with the covid), the crew was nice. So we decided to go with them. Not wanting to pay the tourist platforms on the net I find the number and I pass directly by them.

So we headed for Grand Bay, leaving the flat at 7.30am to avoid taking too many risks. The weather is good, which is a good point. But the road? hell, we take the road passing by Port-Louis, big mistake guys! Well, we arrived in Grand Bay with a good 20 minute delay but I had texted the crew and it was ok. Arriving in front of our boat...my worst nightmare. A catamaran full of people. I take a deep breath and tell myself that we can forget about the 5-10 people since there are 25-30 of us...I, who love the world am delighted, I, who love activities with lots of tourists am once again delighted. We didn't pay, so the question arises, do we stay, or do we go? Finally, we stay and come what may!

Of course, the 16 km that separate us from the destination are going to be quite calm (and I'm not talking about the ocean, agitated that will make some vomit on the boat). We enjoy the

sun and the landscapes, until the expected arrival: translucent water, a dreamy blue glass, fine sand, and a deserted island...well if we don't count the 7-10 catamarans already moored on the area. We will have an hour on the island to swim or sunbathe. It is important to know that unlike our friend we did not have the right to the diving equipment (although I had been told yes by text). That doesn't prevent us from enjoying ourselves, from doing photo sessions with my gopro and the crazy camera of one of the girls.

A very nice couple even lent me a mask so I could see the turtle that was right next to me! This area is still a tidal area, with very little bottom near the island and current, so fish watching was not obvious.

12.30 pm back to the boat for a very nice barbecue with fresh grilled fish, salads and whatever you want to drink. The moment when everybody relaxes a bit. 25 people on this boat and not a single exchange, how sad is that? We already ask the captain if we can jump off the catamaran...yes! This was starting to be fun! Pictures, jumps and a little beer of course. Even the crew relaxed a bit. The return trip was a bit more festive and good-natured! The name of our catamaran? The Calypso.

Although I had a good time, I think that this mass outing is definitely not for me. There were probably less crowded boats, maybe a bit more expensive... so choose carefully according to your mood, and maybe you can even find small fisherman boats to take you to less touristic places! (Which I would have liked!!)

We end up having a drink and a bite to eat at The Beach house and head home!

Seventh Day, and you know what? wake up at dawn! Today we won't be lazing around on a catamaran but hiking up Morne Brabant, "the" hike to do. It isn't very long and is composed of two stages. The first one is an uphill but pleasant path, wide in the middle of the forest. The second, just after the gate... that's another story. You should know that until 2016, if I'm not mistaken, to access this second part, you had to have a guide. The door was closed to the public alone. But now you can go alone.

This part is done on a very rocky surface and is like climbing on some parts. It is not long but you still have to be careful. When you get to the top... the view is breathtaking, with an almost 380° view!

There is a cross at the top. It's important to know that this cross is presented as a tribute. Indeed, some slaves went into, hiding, to escape their masters and their condition. When slavery was abolished, some came to look for them. When they saw this people coming, they got scared and jumped off the mountain... sad story!

We go back down, finally some parts are more impressive to go down than to go up! We look for a place to eat but strangely nothing. Is it because of the covid? hotels? but there is no restaurant along the beaches... We end up in an Indian restaurant in Flic-en-Flac, very good but the service is very slow (cooking to order) and not responsive and welcoming.

Tonight, we go out between girls! We get ready and head for the Mafiozzo! We have a great evening talking, also with the manager who answers our questions about Mauritius, how it works, its economy...! and since he doesn't want to let us walk home alone, he asks one of his friends who hadn't been drinking to bring us back! And yes, kindness still exists...it's heartwarming!

Eighth (and last) day, I won't make too much of it, just a last moment in the pool, we tidy up, we have a little restaurant again and it's off to the airport!

A week is a lot and nothing at the same time. Mauritius can offer you a week of idleness on the hotel beach or by the pool, as well as excursions on land or at sea. We couldn't do it all, due to lack of time, weather, and choice. There really is something for everyone! And of course, the Mauritians are so nice that you will have a great time (despite my "grumpiness")

Here is a week with us in Mauritius! I hope you enjoyed it and as usual I tell you...

Kiss kiss Bang bang