Mauritius in 10 days: a day-by-day itinerary

Mauritius is often reduced to its lagoons, but the island hides much more: a heritage shaped by slavery and indenture, a lively capital, mountain forests, waterfalls and a mixed cuisine. This ten-day route goes around the island, changing base three times, from the south-east to the north and then the south-west, to alternate beaches, sightseeing and hikes without long hours on the road.

Day by day

Days 1-2 · Mahébourg and Blue Bay (night : Mahébourg)
The airport is a quarter of an hour from Mahébourg, a small fishing town in the south-east and an ideal place to start gently. Stroll along the waterfront, visit the National History Museum, housed in an old colonial mansion, and, if you are there on a Monday, the bustling market. The next day, snorkel in Blue Bay Marine Park, one of the finest coral gardens on the island, reachable by glass-bottom boat. Also book a guided visit to Île aux Aigrettes, a nature reserve protecting endemic species such as the pink pigeon and giant tortoises.

Days 3-4 · The east coast and Île aux Cerfs (night : East coast (Belle Mare or Trou d'Eau Douce))
Head up the east coast, about an hour's drive, to Trou d'Eau Douce or Belle Mare, known for their long white-sand beaches. From Trou d'Eau Douce, boats run to Île aux Cerfs, in the middle of a turquoise lagoon: go early to avoid the crowds and walk to the coves furthest from the jetty. Many trips also stop at the Grand River South East waterfall. The next day, enjoy the beach or go kayaking in the lagoon. In the southern winter, from June to August, the trade winds blow hard on this coast: days are cooler, but the sky often stays clear.

Days 5-6 · Port Louis, Pamplemousses and the north (night : Grand Baie)
Settle in Grand Baie, the lively resort of the north, about an hour from the east coast. Start with the Pamplemousses Botanical Garden, one of the oldest botanical gardens in the southern hemisphere, with its giant water lilies and rare palms, then L'Aventure du Sucre, a museum in a former sugar mill. The next day, head down to Port Louis, the capital: the central market, its spices and dholl puri, the Jummah Mosque, the Caudan waterfront and the UNESCO-listed Aapravasi Ghat, where hundreds of thousands of indentured labourers from India landed. In the evening, watch the sunset by the red-roofed church at Cap Malheureux.

Days 7-8 · Grand Bassin, Black River Gorges and Chamarel (night : Le Morne or La Gaulette)
Head south-west across the central plateau, cooler and often cloudy. Stop at the sacred lake of Grand Bassin, a major Hindu pilgrimage site overlooked by huge statues of Shiva and Durga, then at Black River Gorges National Park, the last great refuge of native forest, where several trails lead to viewpoints over the gorges and the west coast. The next day, visit Chamarel, its Seven Coloured Earths, small dunes in shades of ochre, red and purple formed by weathered volcanic rock, and its nearby waterfall, the highest on the island. Have lunch at one of the village's restaurants, known for their Creole cooking.

Day 9 · Le Morne Brabant, the mountain of freedom (night : Le Morne or La Gaulette)
Le Morne Brabant, a UNESCO-listed mountain, overlooks the south-western tip of the island. In the nineteenth century, runaway slaves are said to have taken refuge here, and it has become a symbol of their resistance; a memorial at the foot of the mountain recalls this history. Set off early for the climb, before the heat: the lower trail is open to all, but the steep, exposed upper section is best done with a guide. From the top, the view over the lagoon and its famous underwater waterfall illusion is spectacular. Finish with an afternoon on Le Morne beach, popular with kitesurfers, or a boat trip to Îlot Bénitiers.

Day 10 · Back to the airport (night : Flight home)

The road from Le Morne to the airport follows the wild, jagged south coast in about an hour to an hour and a quarter. Stop at Gris-Gris, where black cliffs drop into a sea with no coral reef, or at Saint-Félix for a last swim. If your flight leaves late, stop in Souillac at the Telfair Garden and the museum of the poet Robert Edward Hart. Leave a margin to return the hire car and for airport checks, and use your last meal to try a fish curry or a rougaille, with homemade chilli.

Getting around

A hire car is the most flexible option: distances are short, but traffic drives on the left, roads are narrow and traffic jams are frequent around Port Louis at rush hour. Taxis are plentiful, and it is customary to agree the fare before setting off. The bus network covers the whole island cheaply, but is slow and irregular in the evening. The Metro Express light rail links Port Louis with Curepipe, handy for avoiding the jams on the central plateau.

When to go

Mauritius can be visited all year round. From May to December, the southern winter is dry and pleasant, with trade winds that cool the east coast; it is also the kitesurfing season at Le Morne. The southern summer, from January to April, is hot and humid, with frequent showers and a risk of cyclones, especially from January to March. The west coast is generally the driest and most sheltered.

Practical information

Mauritius

Entry	Depends on your passport: visiterafriqueunie.com/en/visa/mauritius/
Yellow fever	Certificate not required
Malaria	none
Currency	Mauritian rupee (MUR)
Languages	Creole, French, English
Plugs	type C, G · dialling code +230 · UTC+4
Emergencies	police 999 ou 112 · ambulance 114 ou 999 · fire 115 ou 999 ou 995

Departure checklist

Documents

☐ Passport valid for at least six months after your return, with blank pages
☐ Visa or e-visa (printed if required)
☐ International vaccination certificate (yellow fever if required)
☐ Travel insurance certificate and assistance number
☐ Paper and digital copies of your passport and bookings
☐ Tickets, bookings and addresses saved offline
☐ International driving permit if you are hiring a vehicle

Health

☐ Travel consultation done and vaccinations up to date
☐ Malaria tablets if your doctor recommends them
☐ First-aid kit: plasters, antiseptic, anti-diarrhoea tablets, rehydration salts
☐ Mosquito repellent suitable for the tropics
☐ Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
☐ Personal medication and prescriptions

Money and connectivity

☐ Bank told, Visa or Mastercard (and a backup card)
☐ Cash in euros or dollars, recent notes in good condition
☐ eSIM or local SIM card sorted
☐ Plug adapter for the country
☐ Power bank and cables
☐ Offline maps downloaded
☐ Afrique Unie app installed

In the bag

☐ Light clothes that cover up (sun, mosquitoes, places of worship)
☐ A fleece for evenings, dawn safaris and altitude
☐ Walking shoes and sandals
☐ Head torch
☐ Water bottle (ideally with a filter)
☐ Small daypack and waterproof pouches
☐ Luggage padlock

Before you close the door

☐ Your government's travel advice reread
☐ Trip registered with your consular service (if it offers this)
☐ Itinerary and contacts left with someone close
☐ Online check-in done and baggage allowance checked

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