

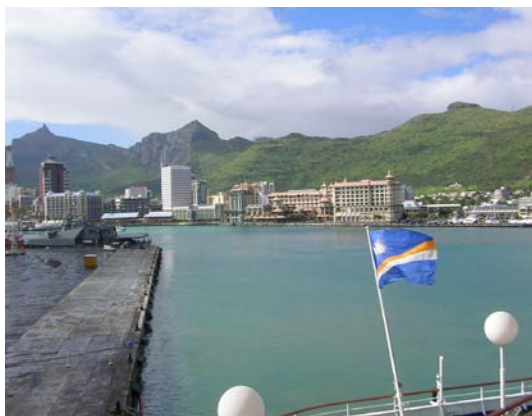
## The Islands of Mauritius, and Le Reunion

We visit these islands for just one day each. Previously we thought that Mauritius was a desirable place to be, and upmarket - how wrong were we! The main streets look OK, with many banks and large shops, and parks with trees. But, turn down the side streets and you are met with a different picture. The street gutters house hundreds of doubtful street sellers, adults and children begging, and rubbish and rotting food all around.

We decided to tour the town by ourselves, and started in a newly developed waterfront area. OK, taxi drivers are a b\*\*\*\*\* nuisance constantly touting for business, as are the shopkeepers with their pesterings. The shops would probably sell more goods if they did not drive out their potential customers! We bought ourselves a new camera here, and also some items in an indoor craft market, before following the map to Chinatown. We did not reach the heart of Chinatown as we turned back as the area was destitute and smelly.

Back in the main town centre Owain went to buy a new mobile phone battery, but found to his horror that his wallet was missing from his pocket! We will never know whether he lost it, or whether he was pickpocketed. After informing the Police, and making a quick call back home to our bank to cancel a debit card, we returned to the Van Gogh where we changed, collected some more cash, and headed back into town to eat. We found a superb Chinese restaurant - must have been good as our ship's captain dined at the next table too, and exchanged pleasantries!

We will remember Mauritius with mixed feelings!



Mauritius



La Reunion

The following morning we berthed at La Reunion, in brilliant sunshine and high temperatures. We opted for a coach trip to a local small town with some beaches.

This French outpost is lovely, even though it was hit by a cyclone just a week ago. A bustling place, all in French, and no signs of the rich/poor divide we were shocked by the day before. We felt perfectly safe walking around the town's shops and attractions, and the two beaches were idyllic with their white sand, and rollers which attracted many surfers.

Morning coffee was taken al fresco, and leisurely, and our coach trip to and from the Van Gogh showed us how beautiful this island is.