



## All Islands are NOT Created Equally

My first visit to Reunion was a vacation my husband and I took quite a few years before deciding to move here. After the two-week visit, my husband and I definitely felt like it was a place we would want **to settle down**. And before the move, we were also able to spend some time in Guam and Hawaii.

For those of you who haven't heard of Guam, it is a **quaint** island south of Japan in the North Pacific that few French know about. To be **fair**, it is much smaller than Reunion with a population of about 160,000 people. Guam has some beautiful beaches and aquatic flora and fauna, as well as friendly locals. It is a popular vacation **hotspot** for the Japanese who **flock** there for **shotgun** weddings and luxury shopping and also has a large American military presence. However, Hawaii still remains a top island vacation spot for Americans, much like Reunion is to the French.

It is safe to say that Hawaii is very similar to Reunion. Administratively speaking, it is one of the 50 states; it is extremely culturally rich and has very similar topographical **features** to Reunion. Hawaii is great for **snorkeling**, beautiful beaches, **tide pool** exploring, hiking, and getting a bird's eye view of it all in a helicopter. Hawaiians are very warm, welcoming and proud of their heritage. This is all part of the "Aloha" spirit along with the "shaka" hand sign which can mean anything from "hello" to "life is good".

By the end of all of these trips, we were, of course, experts on island living. However, nothing **could've** really prepared me for life here. I have had more "there's a first time for everything" moments than ever in my 30+ years of existence.

I will never forget one of the first times I walked my kids to school, there was a chicken foot on the sidewalk and an enormous **centipede** about 10 feet **farther**. When we **bit** in to the **candy canes** we had used to decorate our Christmas tree, they had turned into chewing gum because of the **heat**. I have never been at a **check out stand** where the person in front of me was buying chicken livers, the fry of fish, and **wasp** larvae all at once. I have never been able to run up in the mountains and go to the beach in the same day. Something **quirky** happens every day and there is so much more to experience. As they say **variety is the spice of life**, and here it just happens to be very spicy.





## Vocabulary

to settle down = s'installer

quaint = pittoresque

fair = juste

hotspot = endroit populaire

to flock = affluer

shotgun = de façon rapide

features = caractéristiques

snorkelling = palmes, masque, tuba

tide pool = flaque de marée

Aloha: "Bonjour" en Hawaïien

could've = aurait pu

centipede = scolopendre

farther = plus loin

to bite = mordre

candy canes = sucre d'orges

heat = chaleur

check out stand = la caisse

wasp = guêpe

quirky = original

variety is the spice of life = La diversité, c'est ce qui met du piment dans la vie