

Say Hello to my Little Friends

Reunion is famous for a lot of things. Its volcano, its mountains, the lagoons, the beaches and the wonderful people that inhabit the island are unique. But today I'm not going to talk about those things. I'm going to talk about some of our little friends that we all **encounter** day by day... the insects.

As an Englishman, I've **been used to** seeing very few insects, and those that I have seen have been **tiny** and **harmless**. When I arrived in Reunion, I was quickly **stunned** by the **local array** of **seemingly** enormous insects.

Let's start with the spiders, or babouks as they are locally known. Their thin **hairy legs** stretch out to about six inches (15cm). The first time I saw one I was really **freaked out**. Also, these things can run fast, and once you spot one, you have to catch it before going to bed, or you'll find yourself unable to sleep. If you ever do catch one and decide to **squash** it, don't forget to look at it closely first to see if it's covered in smaller spiders!

Scorpions, thankfully, are a lot rarer than babouks. I had lived in Reunion for 5 years before seeing one. Then on that same day, I saw 3. Since that day, I always give my closed shoes a tap on the ground before **sliding** my foot in. You never know.

The worst of the worst have to be the **cockroaches**. They are twenty times as big as the beetles in England and they can fly. I can't imagine anything more horrible. They just need **fangs** and they'd be something out of a Wes Craven film.

Confronted by all these monsters that I had never seen, my first reaction as an Englishman, was to **crush** them into tiny pieces. **However**, while my wife and I were first dating, she was unhappy that I wanted to annihilate a scorpion that we found **clinging** to the wall. She told me that every creature in Reunion has their own place and their own job to do. Margouillats, for example, feed on mosquitos, and the babouks keep the insect population low.



Keep in mind that if you choose to live on a tropical island like Reunion, you have to respect nature, and learn to live with all the inhabitants. Except mosquitos of course.

Vocabulary

To encounter - rencontrer
To be used to - être habitué à
Tiny - minuscule
Harmless - inoffensif
Stunned - choqué

Local array - sélection locale
Seemingly - apparemment
Hairy Legs - pattes poilues
Freaked out - terrorisé
To squash - écraser

To slide - glisser
Cockroach - cafard
Fangs - dents pointues
To crush - écraser
However - cependant

To cling - s'accrocher



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