



How to Get Hypothermia on a Tropical Island

Maybe this is not one of your **life-long** goals, but if you would like to know how to get hypothermia on a tropical island, then I'm your man. I've even done it **twice**. Now, it's not easy. You have to be dedicated to the task, and not everyone manages it. In fact, this year there were 1600 people who entered this competition in Hellbourg on October 22nd, and only 5 of us **managed to** be in a state of hypothermia by the time we reached La Pleine des Merles. The other 1595 people had to continue, **utterly** disappointed by their **failure**.

Of course, I'm talking about my attempt to complete this year's Mascareignes. A little backstory. 2006, my first attempt at the semi-raid: the doctors stopped me in Deux Bras. Hypoglycaemia. 2008's effort involved a fractured sternum. In 2009 the doctors stopped me with hypothermia in Deux Bras....again! And this year, rebelotte as you say in French, with another hypothermia. It wasn't very cold, but it was raining quite hard and my poncho was about as **effective** as a paper bag, and when I reached the first checkpoint I noticed both hands had turned yellow. 'That can't be good, I thought.' And then the full **body-shakes** arrived, and my temperature **plummeted** to 34 degrees. The lovely docs **stripped** me, **wrapped** me up in gold shiny survival **blankets** and asked 'Did you drink enough?' Yes, I replied. 'Have you eaten something?' Yes, I replied. 'Did you sleep last night?' Ah. Apparently, lack of sleep can bring on hypothermia. It took 2 hours to get my temperature back up to 36 degrees.

Anyway, the real adventure began there. I was in the middle of a forest at 1900m, about 10km from a main road. How was I supposed to get home to St Paul wearing nothing but a pair of trainers and a shiny gold blanket, worn like some kind of glam-rock Roman toga? Together with another hypothermia champion called Catherine, we **trudged** upwards to the closest track, which was the Col des Boeufs car park. A cheery smile welcomed us at the little shop there, as the owner shouted 'Losers aren't welcome!' Which was nice. But with the wind and rain I was too tired to get **annoyed**. But that changed quite quickly. Catherine ordered a coffee and a packet of **fags** (bizarrely enough) and I just said 'listen, I just want a cup of hot water please, I've got hypothermia.' The man handed me a cup of water, looked me in the eye and said, 'that'll be €1.80 please.' Excuse me? 'Well, a tea is €2.00, so without the tea bag that's €1.80.' And, as we say in English, **unbef*ckinglievable**.

La Mascareignes? Never again, I said to myself as we trudged down to Grand Ilet. But the next day, when friends asked me if I would try again, I said 'Of course! See you next year!'

Vocabulary

twice - deux fois

manage to - réussir à

utterly - totalement

failure - echec

effective - efficace

body-shakes - vibrations du corps

plummeted - chuté

stripped - deshabillé

to wrap up - emballer

blanket - couverture

to trudge - marcher péniblement

annoyed - enervé

fags - clopes

unbef*ckinglievable - IN-CROY-ABLE!

