



MADAGASCAR
Adventure Honeymoon

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



ITINERARY

Madagascar • Adventure Honeymoon

21 DAYS • 20 NIGHTS

Antananarivo – Andasibe – Antsirabe – Sahambavy – Faraony river – Ranomafana National Park – Anja Park – Tsaranoro – Ambohitra – Anjajavy – Tana

*This itinerary can be **tailored** to suit your exact requirements*

HIGHLIGHTS

TOUR ESSENTIALS

- Witness the Milne Edwards Sifaka in Ranomafana, an endemic to the striking Eastern rainforests.
- Canoe down the peaceful Faraony River which flows from the central highlands down into the Indian Ocean.
- Uncover the highlands and visit the famous Ring Tailed lemurs of the Anja Conservation Reserve, before exploring the spectacular Tsaranoro Valley.
- Experience a paradise ending at beautiful Anjajavy, with some fantastic activities, wildlife & gorgeous beaches.

Tour Style	Adventure Honeymoon
Tour Start	Antananarivo
Tour End	Antananarivo
Accommodation	Hotel, Lodge, Camping, Bungalows
Included Meals	20 Breakfasts, 12 Lunches, 18 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Medium
Notes	Private/Tailormade Trip

ROMANCING, EXPLORING & ESCAPING



This is a romantic escape with a difference, for the more adventurous of couples. This honeymoon adventure example itinerary provides a fantastic opportunity to enjoy the natural highlights of the “red island” on foot, by canoe, train and by road in a 4x4 – accompanied by your own guide, as well as local guides in the National Parks. Why stick to a conventional honeymoon when you can experience the most unique Island escape as newlyweds, with both pure adventure featuring the finest of wildlife including lemurs, reptiles and birdlife as well as a spot of beach tranquillity. You will end your stay with 5 nights at the stunning private reserve of Anjajavy, simply relaxing on some of the most sublime Madagascan beaches or continuing the adventure with wildlife trekking and snorkelling. This is a real trip of a lifetime and a thrilling honeymoon to remember, full of discovery!

MADAGASCAR *an overview*

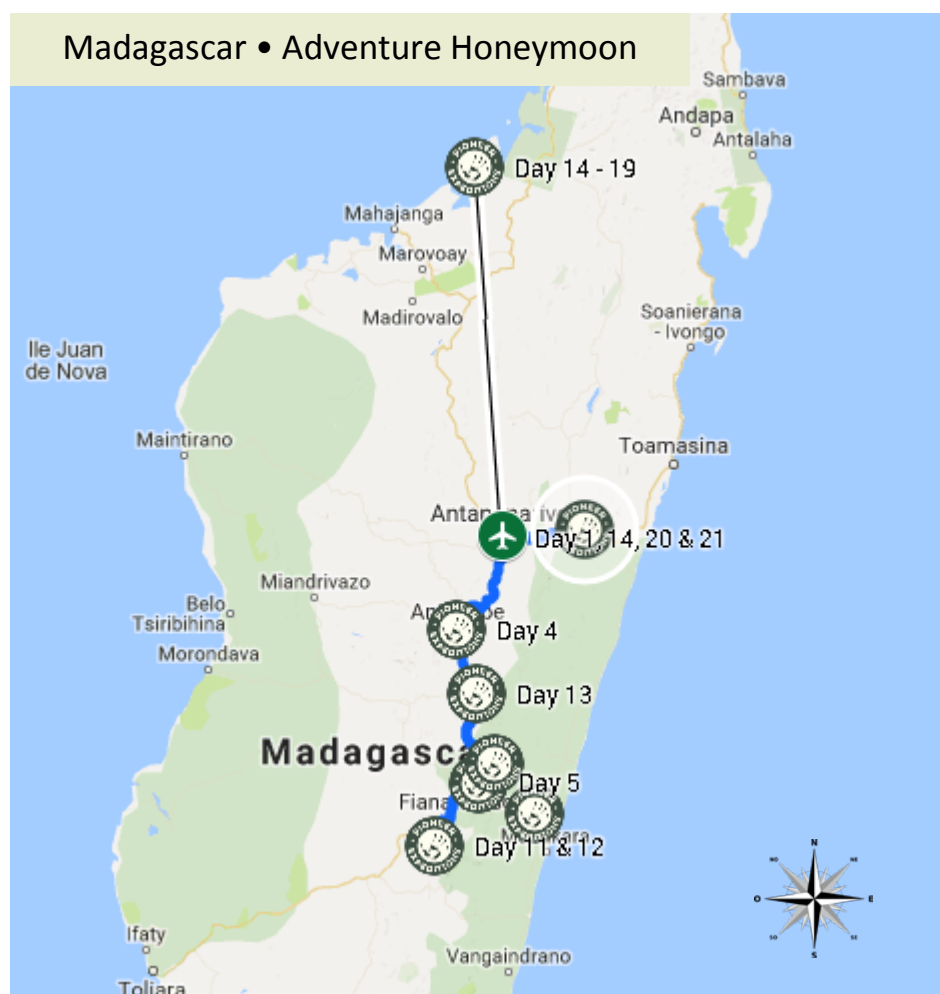
Madagascar is a one-off; there is no other place like it. Its landscapes, animals and plants are simply fantastic! Near the equator with an astonishing array of habitats, ranging from rainforests to deserts and from mountain tops to mangrove swamps, it is one of the most important countries for biodiversity on the planet. The tropical climate is a perfect host to the process of nature and, like nowhere else, the variety and richness of life has flourished. We will see much of the unique flora and fauna of Eastern Madagascar on this great tour.

WHY PIONEER EXPEDITIONS?

We are driven by a passion for adventure travel and wildlife which we love to share, it's reflected in our uniquely wonderful itineraries. We can offer you new experiences that no one else can provide and we create for you, the most incredible adventure holidays imaginable.

Madagascar is truly our specialty; we know it inside-out, in order to provide you with your dream Madagascan adventure... so you can enjoy it as much as we do! No one can organise dream holidays with a difference quite like Pioneer Expeditions.

ITINERARY



DAY 1: Tongasoa eto Antananarivo!

After arriving in Antananarivo (or Tana, as it is known by the locals), you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel.

Antananarivo is the capital and largest city in Madagascar. It is buzzing with activity and full of people flooding the streets, selling everything you could imagine! Tana (as the locals call it) resembles a Mediterranean hill town and exploring its rich cultural and architectural sites on foot is relatively easy (as long as you are willing to climb hundreds of ancient stone steps). It is a hectic city though and we would recommend a driver / guide if you want to explore this city.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
N/A



Distance:
Airport Transfer



Activity:
Personal Preference

DAY 2: Heading to Andasibe National Park to experience our first encounter with lemurs!



This morning we will set off to the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park (previously known as Perinet) where you will spend 1 ½ days exploring this wonderful environment. En-route we will stop at a farm specialising in Madagascan reptiles and butterflies, before arriving at our hotel. This afternoon you will get a chance to stroll around the private reserve of Vakona Lodge with the opportunity to spot lemurs and crocodiles. This evening, take a twilight/nocturnal walk, looking out for the nocturnal species of lemur by catching their eyes in the torchlight.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
150km (3hrs Driving)



Activity:
Wildlife Encounters

DAY 3: Discovering the beauty and wildlife of the unforgettable Andasibe National Park

Today we will explore Andasibe National Park.

Andasibe-Mantadia National Park (formerly known as Perinet) is a 155 square kilometer protected area, about 150 km east of Antananarivo (approx. a three hour drive) consisting principally of primary growth forest. These are home to the teddy bear-like Indri, the largest of Madagascar's lemur species, as well 11 lemur species in total and a wide array of bird life too. Listening to the piercing yet melancholy cry of the Indri in the morning is an evocative experience and for those who are prepared to follow them through the thick rainforest, the reward is often a close-up view of these beautiful creatures. This National Park was inscribed in the World Heritage Site in 2007 as part of the Rainforests of the Atsinanana.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Walking and Wildlife



Day 4: Heading south to the charming towns of Antsirabe & Ambatolampy

After breakfast you will meet your guide and we will set out by car to Antsirabe.

Antsirabe is a tidy, well maintained town which combines the tranquility of a small European provincial town with the exuberance of traditional Malagasy buildings. The third largest city in Madagascar, Antsirabe is known for its relatively cool climate (as the rest of the central region of the country), its industry and the high concentration of pulled rickshaws.



Along the way you can choose to stop off and visit Ambatolampy (the biggest town between Tana and Antsirabe) where we may get the chance to see craftsmen building aluminium pots amongst other things. Alternatively, if time allows, you can also visit Lake Tritriva which is a 2 hour round trip to a stunning lake of volcanic origin with blue/green waters, surrounded by beautiful scenery – walking around the lake will take approximately 1 hour, during this time we will likely meet many local Malagasy people. Where we will stop and what you will do today will depend on your preferences. Today will be a great chance to experience Malagasy life on the road!



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
310km (Around 7hrs Drive, excluding stops)



Activity:
Drive / Culture

DAY 5: Setting off to Sahambavy

Today we will be heading towards Sahambavy.

Upon arrival, we can visit the tea plantations and tonight we will stay at the Lac Hôtel with a breathtaking view of the islands unique tea plantation (520 hectares) which spreads out as far as the eye can see. The beautiful landscape with the charming lake is the perfect destination for a relaxing stop-off.

Sahambavy is a small town on the railway from Mankarana to Fianarantsoa. Its main attraction is the Sahambavy Lake, nestled at the foot of a hill. It is also famed for the only Madagascan tea plantations.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
5hrs Drive



Activity:
Drive / Culture



DAY 6: Catch the train to **Manakara** & begin canoeing adventure of **The Faraony River**



Today we head out on the next part of our adventure from Fianarantsoa to Manakara (by train and canoe!). The trip will take us through dense forests and along a calm river (the few rapids we will encounter over the next few days are gentle and can be avoided if you don't want the potential of a swim..... that said the first rapid tends to be the one to catch most of us out).

We start by a half day train journey through scenic and interesting landscapes. The train ride takes approximately 5-6 hours. We will be travelling on reserved 1st class seats (the train can get pretty full!) and will disembark in Manampatrana, where the Faraony river winds gently between boulders, cliffs and cultivated banks.

We will meet our canoe team and set off on a short canoe downstream (grade 1 and 2 rapids) before stopping on one of the beaches to setup camp (afternoon showers are not unusual in this area). Your guides and canoe team are in charge of all the logistics (food, firewood etc.) and you only have to put up your own tent. All meals, mainly from fresh and local products are generously served and prepared with care.



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
5-6 hrs Train Ride



Activity:
Culture and Canoe

DAY 7 & 8: Canoeing down the **Faraony River** on a paddling adventure

We will dedicate these two days to canoeing down the Faraony River.

The Faraony flows down from the central highlands of Madagascar into the Indian Ocean. Situated on the east of the island, the area is tranquil and fairly still. Like many rivers in this region it seems to bear exploitable amounts of precious minerals so there are 'gold rushes' on many of the river bends.



Along the way we will meet many smiling Malagasy people.



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Canoeing



DAY 9: Farewell Faraony River & arrival at magnificent Ranomafana!



This morning we will lay up our canoes and say goodbye to the Faraony - from here onwards the river starts to flow furiously through rapids and cataracts so we abandon it in its ocean race. From here we have a 4 – 5 hour trek (12 miles walking), where we will rendezvous with our driver and vehicle before heading to Ranomafana. We will get to Ranomafana in time for dinner



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
12 Mile walk + 4 hrs Drive



Activity:
Trekking and Drive

DAY 10: Discovering the wildlife and beauty of Ranomafana National Park

We will head out on a forest trail today and have lunch in the park, so we should get a chance to see much of the wildlife first hand throughout the day.

Ranomafana is particularly rich and beautiful, a mountainous subtropical park which contains lowland moist forest, cloud forest and high plateau forest and is the home to a large number of lemur species (13 in total), as well as 118 birds and more than 70 amphibians and reptiles so is really a great place to see some of the unique species living in Madagascar. Lemurs include the brown lemur, golden bamboo lemur and the exceptionally rare greater bamboo lemur which is relatively easy to see in Ranomafana. Wildlife viewing is good all year round but is most productive from mid-Sept to May.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Wildlife and Exploring

DAY 11: Discovering wildlife at Anja Reserve and heading to the extraordinary Tsaranoro Valley

After breakfast, we will start our drive to Anja Park, which lasts a little more than 3 hours.

Created in 2001 and located near Ambalavao, the Anja Community Reserve is a woodland area and freshwater lake, at the base a large cliff. Most of the reserve is dominated by fallen rocks and boulders but interestingly there are two small caves providing habitat for bats and owls. The reserve was created to help preserve the local environment and wildlife and is one of the more touristy places you visit, however is perfect for lovers of walking and wildlife and offers a unique occasion to interact with 'wild' ring-tailed lemurs somewhere between tamed and familiar!



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After visiting the reserve we will drive to our next destination – the Tsaranoro Valley (approx. 2 hrs away). This afternoon we can explore on a short trekking adventure or simply relax. Our accommodation here will be a traditional bungalow situated at the foot of Tsaranoro's cliff.

This afternoon we will be able to go on a short trek to explore the area or simply relax.



Overnight:
Bungalow



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
200km (Approx. 5hrs Driving time)



Activity:
Driving, Wildlife and Exploring

DAY 12: Exploring the remarkable natural beauty of Tsaranoro Valley

We will spend today exploring this stunning area on foot and meeting all the locals.

Visiting the Tsaranoro Valley is a fantastic opportunity to see Madagascar in all its natural glory. Prepare to be enchanted by the astounding landscapes, stunning red land and the beautiful and awe-inspiring Massif of Andringitra. You will be able to see many kinds of orchids, three sorts of palms including one kind which is endemic to the Andringitra, chameleons, lizards, snakes, batrachians, birds including the famous peregrine falcon as well as the especially friendly Catta (ring-tailed) Lemurs living in small families around the camp. The spectacular rock walls of the massif and the mind-blowingly beautiful valley offer numerous climbing routes and hiking trails and a thriving village which can be visited.



We will also have the chance to visit the base for our local agents reforestation effort (a passion which is shared (via wood-en-stock) by Pioneer Expeditions). Here we will have the opportunity to visit and see the reforestation effort for ourselves. Depending on the time of year we may also get to plant some young saplings.



Overnight:
Bungalows



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Exploring and Wildlife

DAY 13: Heading back up to Ambositra

Today we must start our long journey back to Tana, so we will head to Ambositra.

Ambositra is a city in central Madagascar. High on a plateau surrounded by misty green peaks, It is also the arts-and-crafts capital of Madagascar and there are over 25 artisans' shops, selling woodcarvings, raffia baskets, polished stones, marquetry (objects inlaid with colored woods) and paintings. Ambositra is a picturesque and lively town, full of tall red-brick Betsileo houses lining its crooked streets.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
275km (8hrs Drive)



Activity:
Drive and Culture



DAY 14: Arrival back in Antananarivo

We will head back to Tana today. You will have time to visit the handicraft market in Tana and enjoy the rest of the day as wish.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B



Distance:
270km (5hr Drive)



Activity:
Personal Preference

DAY 15: Flying north to stunning Anjajavy – one of the most romantic destinations in Madagascar!

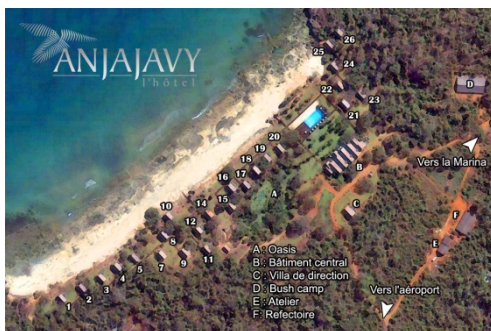


You will take the early morning flight, getting you to Anjajavy at 8.30am. Your journey starts as soon as you approach the landing strip of Anjajavy: you will overfly the forests, then the mangrove swamps, turn to your right above the sea and land on the red earth of the peninsula...

The transfer from the airport to the lodge will already enable you to encounter strange animals and to glimpse the baobabs.

On arrival at the lodge you will certainly be conquered by the luxuriance of the native vegetation visible in the oasis.

But it is only in the following 5 days that you will take full measure of the forest, the secret creeks, the sea which uncovers immense beaches at low tide, the moving mangroves and their mysterious birds, the jagged coral ruins on which only the wild trees of Madagascar are capable of growing...



Overnight:
Hotel Anjajavy



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
Short Flight



Activity:
Personal Preference

DAY 16-19: Spending a few days, unwinding in a luxury wildlife paradise – Anjajavy

These days are free to be spent at your own leisure.

Coral reefs, tsingy, pristine beaches and extensive mangroves will simply take your breath away. Many activities are available in Anjajavy, such as trekking, snorkeling, meeting the locals, visiting villages and discovering a glimpse of their development projects. As a honeymoon gift, a



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30 minute massage will be offered for the both of you.



Overnight:
Hotel Anjavy



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Personal Preference

DAY 20: Flight back down to Antananarivo

You will leave your piece of paradise and take the morning flight back to Tana.

Upon arrival in Tana you will get a chance to visit the local handicraft market (if you are interested).



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
Short Flight



Activity:
Personal Preference

DAY 21: End of Trip

Transfer to airport in time for flight home. If you are on the Air France or Air Kenya trip which leaves early morning of day 13, you can opt to have a day use room &/or driver/guide for the day (not included).



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
B



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Onward Journey/Flight Home

NB: This itinerary is subject to change – arrangements, routes and facilities are subject to variation depending on local conditions. We can also tailor itineraries to suit your exact requirements. When driving times are given, this is only an indication. It aims to reflect the actual driving time (and doesn't include stops, lunch, traffic). The road journeys, while often long, are one of the great ways to experience Madagascar. There is so much life on the road and many photographic opportunities along the way from a natural and people perspective.

If this trip isn't quite what you are looking for, we can tailor itineraries to suit your exact requirements.

GETTING AROUND

- Transport will consist of 4x4, to give you the most authentic, off-the-beaten track experience. These vehicles are best at tackling the challenging roads that Madagascar primarily consists of.
- Madagascar is notorious for the unreliability of its domestic flights in terms of time. The flights schedules are always subject to change at anytime and often experience cancellations, which are not ideal when following a schedule; this makes it a lot more reliable to travel by road for the most part.
- Distances and times will of course be lengthy due to the vastness of the island and lack of good-quality road systems throughout the country. However, this all adds to the adventurousness of any Madagascar trip; but is definitely something to be aware of whilst travelling around Madagascar.



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Included

- ☉ All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- ☉ Accommodation as described
- ☉ English speaking Madagascan guide from day 2 – day 14
- ☉ Local guide within Ranomafana National Park
- ☉ Canoe team
- ☉ All transfers
- ☉ Charter flights to Anjajavy
- ☉ All entrance fees
- ☉ All camping and canoe equipment
- ☉ Porters for trekking, you only carry your day pack

Not Included

- Meals other than mentioned
- International flights
- Tips
- Personal expenses
- Alcoholic and soft drinks (water included)
- Sleeping bag

ACCOMMODATION *at a glance*

	Location	Accommodation	Example
Night 1	Antananarivo	Hotel	<i>Relais des Plateaux</i>
Night 2 & 3	Andasibe	Hotel	<i>Andasibe Hotel</i>
Night 4	Antsirabe	Hotel	<i>Chambres des Voyageurs</i>
Night 5	Sahambavy	Hotel	<i>Lac Hôtel</i>
Night 6, 7 & 8	Faraony River	Camping	<i>Camping</i>
Night 9 & 10	Ranomafana	Hotel	<i>Thermal Hotel</i>
Night 11 & 12	Tsaranoro Valley	Bungalow	<i>Camp Catta</i>
Night 13	Ambositra	Hotel	<i>Hotel L'Artisan</i>
Night 14	Antananarivo	Hotel	<i>Palissandre Hotel</i>
Night 15, 16, 17, 18 & 19	Anjajavy	Hotel	<i>Anjajavy L'Hotel</i>
Night 20	Antananarivo	Hotel	<i>Palissandre Hotel</i>



WHAT OUR CLIENTS HAVE SAID...

"For a honeymoon Madagascar can be a fantastic mix of idyllic eco friendly beach resorts and 'real travel' through a little explored country with stunning wildlife and scenery and lovely friendly people"

-Mr & Mrs Rolfe

"Personalised tour for just the 2 of us was fab, especially as i was unwell, and it was our honeymoon so it was lovely just the 2 of us Seeing and hearing the Indri in Andasibe...i will never forget that haunting sound!!Bakuba was amazing!!! Ocean View Anakao ...food incredible..."

-A. Mead



WHEN TO GO...

The majority of our Madagascar trips take place March to December, this is when Madagascar is at its best. The weather and climate can change a lot throughout the year and when you go to experience this remarkable country, depends on your preferences.

Madagascar Spring: **March - May** (Dry and Warm)

- ☺ After the rains have passed. Everything is lush and green and fertile
- ☺ March is great in the South West, but some roads in the North and West can still be recovering from the monsoon season.
- ☺ April and May is the perfect time to visit. Great wildlife, great weather and not too many tourists.

Madagascar Winter: **June - August** (Dry)

- ☺ This ideal season for trekking / activities as is the coolest time in Madagascar. Temperature vary in the different areas but typically around 20 degree C
- ☺ Evenings (especially in the highlands) can get very cool at night (10 degrees C)
- ☺ Good time for seeing lemurs, but due to the cooler weather smaller mammals and reptile will be less active
- ☺ July and August can be busier in the national parks due to school holidays.
- ☺ August and September are ideal for keen birdwatchers to visit Madagascar.

Madagascar Spring: **Sept - November** (Dry and Hot)

- ☺ September to November is highly popular, as even North Eastern Madagascar is dry now.
- ☺ August and September are ideal for keen birdwatchers to visit Madagascar.
- ☺ It is hotter with very little rain, great for spotting chameleons and lizards, but quite hot for trekking / activities – in November temperatures start to rise rapidly.
- ☺ October is particularly perfect for witnessing baby lemurs.
- ☺ Main downside with this time of year is that it is the peak season so national parks are busier with more tourists

Madagascar Summer: **December – March** (Hot and Rainy Season)

- ☺ The rains start to come. The North East is still relatively dry in December and we offer many Christmas trips.
- ☺ January/February should definitely be avoided as it becomes monsoon season - due to the heavy rainfall causing the already difficult roads to become muddy and impassable. The RN7 is still drivable so the 'classic' Madagascar route is still possible for those who can only travel in this season
- ☺ This is the best time of year for orchid lovers



*"My favourite time of year is **May** because the rains have finished so everything is lush and green. You don't see many other tourists as they tend to go in September and October, but everything is just beautiful – it's pretty perfect."*

- **Laurenne Mansbridge**
Pioneer Director



MEET THE GUIDES *of Madagascar*

Our guides are at the forefront of your trip, so it's important you know who will be looking after you and showing you the wonders of this extraordinary country. We pride ourselves on having talented, trustworthy, knowledgeable and caring local guides. We have both Naturalist guides and Adventurist guides who will make your trip even more special. Nobody knows Madagascar quite like them!



MAMY
NATURALIST GUIDE

- 🕒 Mamy is highly experienced and has been working as a guide since 1996.
- 🕒 His main interests as a guide are fauna and flora, nature and landscapes, forestry, villages and cultures.
- 🕒 His specialities are Birdwatching and Wildlife!



HERY
NATURALIST GUIDE

- 🕒 Hery has worked as a guide since 2006, where he trained in the Ranomafana National Park.
- 🕒 He has a passion for amphibians and reptiles as well as botany. Hery has a particular interest in Orchids!
- 🕒 His specialities are in Plants and of course, Wildlife.



TOKY
NATURALIST GUIDE

- 🕒 Toky has been working a guide since 2014, having previously studied Tourism in Antsirabe.
- 🕒 His main passions as a guide are: Flora and Fauna, Cultures, Geography and History.
- 🕒 His specialities lie in Madagascan Culture and Geology as well as Wildlife.



JOE
ADVENTURIST GUIDE

- 🕒 Following a considerably tough childhood, Joe has been happily and successfully working as a guide since 2005.
- 🕒 His main passions as an adventurist guide are: rafting, kayaking, sea-kayaking as well as trekking.
- 🕒 Following many years of experience, Joe's specialty lies in river-based activities and adventures.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activity Duration	2 – 5 hours per day
Season	March - December
Best Time To Go	September – December
Responsibility	As part of our commitment to responsible travel and in conjunction with Woodstock.org we finance a tree nursery and orchard in Italavina – which is a long term reforestation project.
Difficulty Level	Our grades have been designated based on our perception of the degree of physical activity you are likely to require to enjoy the adventure. These are only a guideline. This itinerary has a 'Medium' level (2 – 5 hours of activities per day). This means that you will need an average level of fitness.

THE PIONEER BOOKING PROCESS

Where do you go from here? Well, you can feel free to email us at info@pioneerexpeditions.com if you're interested in this trip, or any of our other expeditions from around the world. Visit our website www.pioneerexpeditions.com to unearth all of our other equally amazing trips and destinations.

1. Contact us -

We will be happy to answer any questions or enquiries you may have. From here we will begin to plan and put together your dream adventure holiday! Alternatively, on our website you will find our booking and enquiry forms; once filled in, we will be notified of your enquiry and will get back to you ASAP.

2. Leave everything to us -

Everything will be arranged and booked by us, but we will make sure to keep you updated every step of the way. In addition, we can arrange your international flights if needed, as we have access to competitive airfares. We can also arrange any additional tours or additional night's accommodation.

3. Wait for your adventure to begin -

Sit back and count down the days until your trip of a lifetime with Pioneer Expeditions. We'll handle all of the last minute preparations and provide you with everything you need. All practical information will be sent out to you, prior to your trip.

If you feel like altering this itinerary to suit your personal preferences, we can arrange all of that and more – just get in contact with us and let us know your requirements and wishes. From here, we can simply tailor-make your dream holiday.

