



Madagascar
Family Special

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



Do something extraordinary.....

Itinerary

12 Days • 11 Nights

Madagascar • Family Special

Antananarivo – Antsirabe – Ambatolampy – Ambohimahasoa – Ambalavao – Anja Reserve – Andringitra, Tsarosoa – Isalo National Park – Ifaty – Spiny Forest – Tuleur

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lemur spotting
- Exploring the Isalo National park
- Rock scrambling
- Beach bungalows at Ifaty
- Private driver and guide

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Family Expedition
Tour Start/End	Antananarivo
Accommodation	Hotel, Bungalow, Eco-lodge
Included Meals	11 Breakfasts, 7 lunches, 8 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Easy / Moderate

A great value family adventure to explore some of the more off the beaten track reserves and parks. You will have the opportunity to see lemurs (including King Julian!), chameleons and plenty of birdlife as well as visiting small towns and communities where you will get a chance to experience real Malagasy life before ending up at Ifaty on the Indian Ocean with its clear waters, white sands, safe beaches and whale watching.
We can run this as a private trip to suit your dates

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 on this great family adventure which is sure to satisfy everyone in the family.

Itinerary



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DAY 1: ANTANANARIVO

After arriving in Antananarivo, 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).



Overnight Hotel.

DAY 2: ANTSIRABE & AMBATOLAMPY (B,L,D)

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.



The journey takes approx. 3+ hours on a good, windy road, and 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 (2hr round trip) – a stunning lake of volcanic origin with blue/green waters, surrounded by beautiful scenery – we can walk around the lake in approx. 1 hour and 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.

Upon arrival at Antsirabe you could choose to visit the stone cutting workshop where crystals are cut.

Overnight guest house

DAY 3: AMBOHIMAHASOA (B,L,D)

This morning we will drive to Ambohimahaso (driving time - 4h). Tonight we will spend the night in Lemur's Forest camp/lalatsara Bungalows which are set in a managed forest (within a private eco-reserve). As the name dictates several species of lemur can be found here including the Milne Edwards Sifaka and we can spend the afternoon exploring the forests, as well as a short night walk. There are 2 newer bungalows with their own facilities (which we always try to book) but if these are not available, the bungalows here are very basic with shared facilities.

Overnight at Lemur Forest Camp lalatsara.



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DAY 4: LEMUR CAMP & AMBALAVAO (B,L,D)

This morning we will spend exploring the forest and then set off Ambalavao.

Situated in tropical surroundings in the most southern part of the central highlands, near Fianarantsoa, Ambalavao is noted for its houses with wooden balconies with elaborate carvings and tiled roofs. It is also known for its lively cattle market on Monday and Thursdays on the outskirts of town where you will be able to see a large number of Zebu and herdsmen on the roads. Seen as one of the most beautiful towns in the high plateaus boasting brightly painted buildings on the main street that look a bit like gingerbread houses.



Overnight hotel.

DAY 5: ANJA RESERVE & TSARANORO VALLEY (B,L,D)

Another exciting day ahead as we visit the Anja reserve (just a few kms from Ambalavao).

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!



We spend 1 ½ hrs on a guided tour exploring this area & checking out the caves (including some rock scrambling). This afternoon we will drive to the Tsaranoro Valley in the Andringitra National Park (which takes approx 2 ½ hrs) which will be our home for the next couple of days.

Overnight at bungalows – Tsarasoa

DAYS 6 & 7: DISCOVERING THE ANDRINGITRA NATIONAL PARK & TSARANORO VALLEY (B,L,D)

These days we will spend 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.



Tsarasoa is also the base for our local agents reforestation effort (a passion which is shared (via wood-en-stock) by



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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.

Overnights at bungalows – Camp Catta

DAY 8: TSARANORO & ISALO (B,L,D)

We will have another chance to explore this area before having an early lunch and setting off by car to Isalo which should take us around 4 hours on track and road.

Overnight at eco-lodge.

DAY 9: DISCOVERING ISALO NATIONAL PARK (B,L,D)

We will spend the day exploring the Isalo massif on foot.

Isalo is the park of the Big South and the most visited parks of Madagascar. It is known for its exceptional landscape. The Isalo National Park protects over 81,000 hectares of widely eroded Jurassic sandstone massif. The grassy plains are surrounded by sandstone ridges. Most of the vegetated areas of the park are covered with dry grassland or sparse, low deciduous woodland, however near streams and in deeper canyons there are also ferns and feathery palm trees. Animal life isn't the parks most prominent feature, but there are a few species to look for including six species of lemur (three nocturnal, three daytime) including the ring tail lemur and the White (dancing lemur) sifaka. It is also home to approx 55 species of bird including the rare Benson's rock-thrush.



We will be able to enjoy the varied landscapes and swim in a natural pool if you wish to. We will have a picnic lunch on the trail. Then we will head to Ifaty where next 2 nights will be spent relaxing at a hotel facing the Mozambique Channel and superb reef of Ifaty, this hotel provides a perfect setting for a relaxing beach break at the end of your adventure.

Overnight hotel (hotel de la plage or similar)

DAY 10: IFATY (B)

Facing the Mozambique Channel and the superb coral reef of Ifaty, less than 20 kms from Tuléar, you will discover the beauty of beaches not tainted by mass tourism. Ifaty is a small fishing village with palm-fringed white beaches on the south-western coast of Madagascar, and is an ideal place to relax after visiting the central highlands. The beach is relatively narrow, but the (off shore) snorkeling and diving is good. In July and August, you may see migrating whales pass nearby through the Mozambique Channel. Between May and October, the humpback whales can sometimes be seen with their whale-calves.



Local fishermen will also be happy to offer you a trip in their traditional fishing boats (pirogues). Or if you prefer you can simply relax on the stunning white sandy beaches or swim in the turquoise waters.



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Just north of Ifaty you can find the Reniala Nature Reserve ‘Spiny Forest’ , a remarkable habitat adapted to the heat and drought of the area giving it the resultant thorny &/or bloated drought resistant trees and plants. The spiny forests inland from Ifaty are of great interest to birdwatchers and botanical enthusiasts alike. Here you will be able to see some very large iconic Baobab trees, an abundance of birds (a true paradise for ornithologists) as well as possibly some locally endemic species such as the long-tailed ground roller and sub-desert mesite. This unique habitat is severely threatened by deforestation and by visiting these sites, you will not only enjoy some of the little remaining spiny forest in Madagascar, but also actively contribute to its conservation (the sites are currently not protected). A visit here can be organized by the hotel, and you can even travel there by pirogue – which we highly recommend.



Overnight at Hotel de la plage.

DAY 11: IFATY & BACK TO TANA (B,D)

Today we will catch the Air Madagascar flight to Tana. Depending on your time of arrival in Tana you can visit the handicraft market.

DAY 12: FLIGHT HOME (B)

Transfer to the airport in time for your flight home.

NB: This itinerary is subject to change – arrangements, routes and facilities are subject to variation depending on local conditions. On this particular trip there is a minimum age of 8 and some previous outdoors experience is useful. We can also tailor itineraries to suit your exact requirements including catering for younger children

Important Information

INCLUDED	NOT INCLUDED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner) ➢ Accommodation as described ➢ English speaking guide, driver and private vehicle from day 1 – day 10 ➢ Local guides within the national parks ➢ All transfers ➢ Internal flight ticket ➢ All National Park entrance fees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Meals other than mentioned ➢ International flights ➢ Tips ➢ Personal expenses ➢ Alcoholic and soft drinks (water included) ➢ Optional tours/activities eg. Spiny Forest



Additional Information

ACTIVITY DURATION	March – December
SEASON	March – December
BEST TIME TO GO	April - November
GROUP SIZE	The price is per person & based on a private trip based on a family of 4
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.
EXPEDITION SCHEDULE	This is run as a private trip, so we are able to suit your dates and requirements. We can also tailor the trip to suit.
DIFFICULTY LEVEL	As this is a private trip, we can tailor any walking within parks and reserve to suite the ages and requirements of your family

