



Cycle Madagascar

From the highland into the coast

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



Itinerary	Cycle Madagascar • From the highland into the coast
16 Days • 15 Nights Cycling - 8 days	Antananarivo – Antsirabe – Ambositra – Ranomafana NP – Fianarantsoa – Amabalavao – Ihosy – Ranohira – Isalo NP – Toliara (Tulear) – Ifaty

HIGHLIGHTS

- 🌍 Experience a special 500 km bike ride
- 🌍 Cycle in a small group
- 🌍 Hike in Ranomafana and Isalo National Park
- 🌍 Swim and snorkel in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Cycling Expedition
Tour Start	Antananarivo
Tour End	Antananarivo
Accommodation	Hotel, Lodge, Bungalow
Included Meals	15 Breakfasts, 12 lunches, 12 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Medium

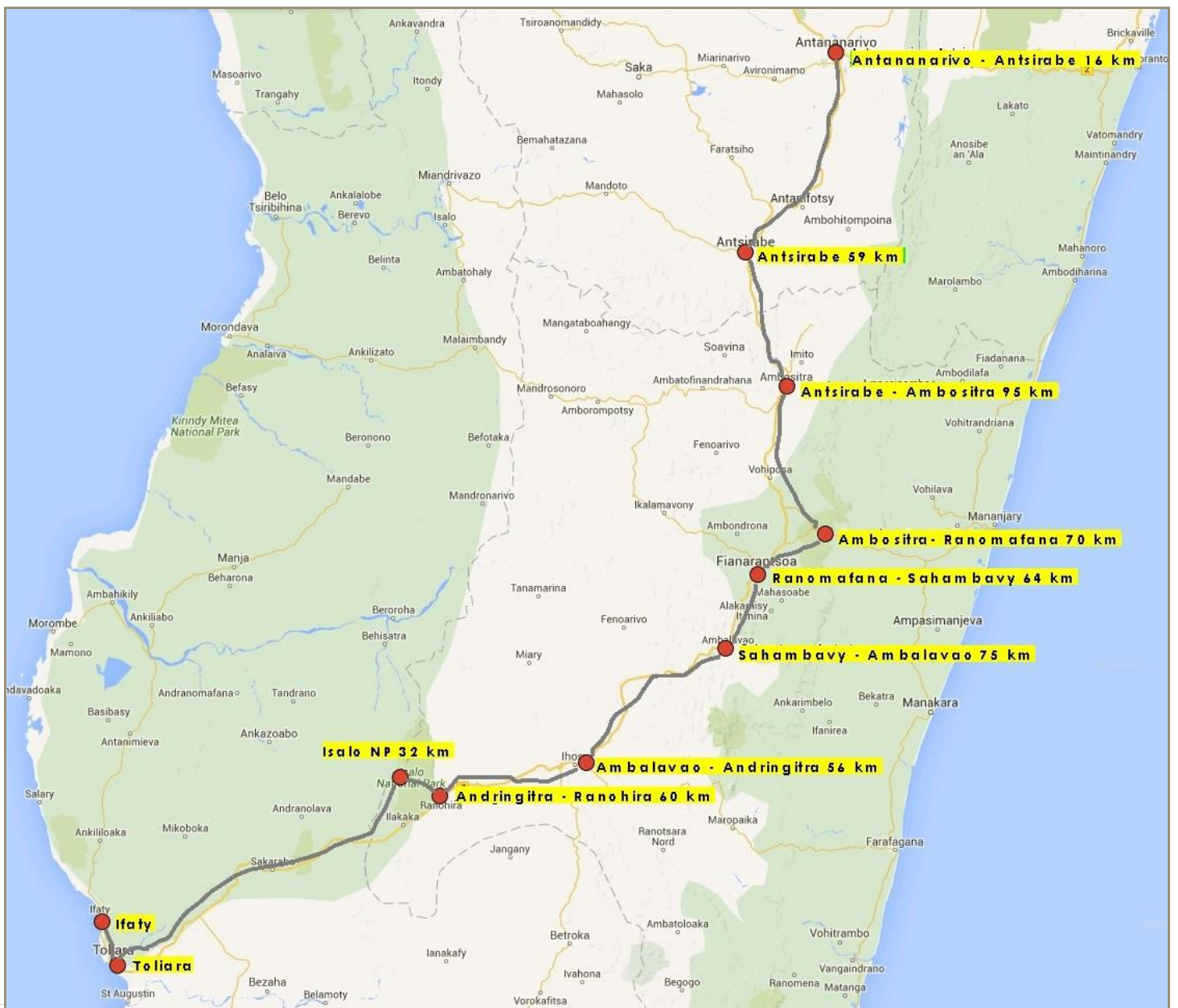
Cycle from the Malagasy highlands to the coast in an unforgettable experience to discover the fourth biggest island in the world. From Antsirabe to Ifaty beach we cover about 500 km cycling. The trip gives all bikers and cyclists a good chance to meet local people, learn about their culture and customs, explore fauna and flora and of course cycle through villages and different landscapes..

Overview

This is a small group trip, however we can also organise private departures to suit. Typically you will be sharing your experiences with between six to 12 like-minded bikers and you'll have a cycling tour manager with you. Whether you are travelling alone or with friends it is a great way to explore Madagascar. Whilst the itinerary is scheduled there is some flexibility. This trip will appeal to travellers of all ages who enjoy meeting new people as well as experiencing new cultures.

This itinerary is a well-balanced tour, mixing wildlife, cycling and culture as well as having a mix of tarred road and dirt road.

Map



Mad07



Pioneer Expeditions
4 Minster Chambers • 43 High Street • Wimborne • Dorset • BH21 1HR
t 01202 798922 • e info@pioneerexpeditions.com

Itinerary

DAY 1: ANTANANARIVO

Upon arrival in Antananarivo you will be greeted by your tour manager and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Antananarivo (also known as Tana) 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).

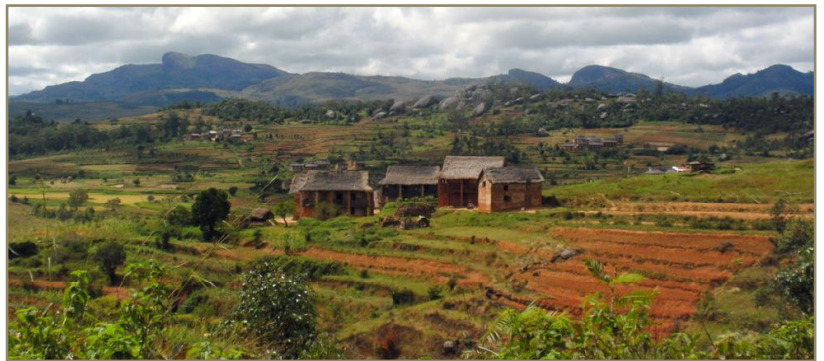


DAY 2: ANTANANARIVO – ANTSIRABE (B,L,D)

● About 16 km cycling ●

Transfer to Antsirabe by car. On the way we visit an aluminium pot making factory in Ambatolampy. The drive takes us along a gravel road in the highlands, past rice and fruit fields

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.



DAY 3: ANTSIRABE – LAKE ANDRAIKIBA – LAKE TRITRIVA – BETAFO – ANTSIRABE (B,L,D)

● About 59 km cycling, mostly dirt road ●

Today we visit the the two most known crater lakes in this region - Andraikiba and Tritriva. On the way we have the chance to enjoy the typical landscape of the Merina ethnic group, we pass first Andraikiba (7 km from the city). With a circumference of approx. 5 km it is easy to easily cycle around. After, we continue the fun with our mountain bike along a track to reach another lake, even more spectacular, and full of myths - lake Tritriva. Before even reaching it, we can see the Mount Tritriva starting from the village of Belazao. We will enjoy our picnic lunch here before returning to Antsirabe



DAY 4: ANTSIRABE – AMBOSITRA (B,L,D)

- About 95 km cycling ●

After breakfast we cycle further south on the hilly road to Ambositra, passing many rice terraces of farmers who can harvest up to three times a year. Ambositra is the home of the Zafimaniry carving and we will visit a carpenter. Tonight we will stay at a nice hotel, where the rooms have been decorated by local artists.

DAY 5: AMBOSITRA – RANOMAFANA (B,L,D)

- About 70 km cycling, including 25 km dirt road ●

A transfer by our vehicle takes us to the small village of Camp Robin. From this rural village we ride in a very beautiful valley below towering granite boulders to Ambohimahaso.

After two climbs on the short tar section we ride again through villages and eucalyptus forest until we reach the rain forest of Ranomafana National Park. The last few miles are downhill to our lodge where we will stay for the night.

DAY 6: RANOMAFANA NATIONAL PARK (B,L,D)

Today we will enjoy a walk in Ranomafana National Park

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.



DAY 7: RANOMAFANA – SAHAMBAVY (B,L,D)

- About 64 km cycling, including 44 km dirt road ●

After breakfast we drive back up again to Andovoka, and from here we start to cycle. During the journey we will see locals selling piles of sand, gained from the nearby river as well as women weaving baskets. On a good gravel road we reach our hotel right in the centre of a tea growing area. If time allows we can possibly visit the Sahambavy Tea Estate, the only tea plantation in Madagascar. The tea estate created in 1970, set in a pretty valley beside Lake Sahambavy, produces large quantities of tea for both export to Mombasa in Kenya and for local consumption. Overnight stay in the charming bungalows overlooking a lake.

DAY 8: SAHAMBAVY – AMBALAVAO (B,L,D)

- About 75 km cycling, including 15 km easy dirt road ●

We cycle to Fianarantsoa, the former spiritual centre of the country. We will relax here for a while and you will have an opportunity to get souvenirs if you would like. We will then head on, mostly downhill, to Ambalavao. The ride is very scenic, with views into the valleys. Shortly before arrival there are a few more hills.

Our alternative is to cycle to Ambalavao from the hotel Sahambavy 54 km on mostly difficult dirt road. The car cannot follow here. We cross several small valleys with rice and cassava plantations and some eucalyptus forests. It is an adventure, and tourists do not come here; the children have rarely seen light-coloured people and are curious about us.



The 9 km long descent to Ambalavao rewards us for the steep climb. In Ambalavao we visit the traditional Antaimoro papermaking. The origin of the copper-coloured paper that feels like fine, silky wallpaper is far back into the past.

DAY 9: AMBALAVAO – ANJA VILLAGERS PARK – TSARANORO (B,L,D)

- About 56 km cycling, including 20 km dirt road ●

Near to our hotel is a craft shop, which produces the well-known Antaimoro paper. We leave the busy little town heading further south. The landscape changes into open grassland savannah dotted with enormous granite mountains. Bizarre landscapes of towering cliffs await us in the small nature reserve of Anja with superb scenery, plants, Betsileo history, caves and tombs and ring-tailed lemurs (also known as Catta lemurs). We take an hour walk into the park before we leave the road entering the Tsaranoro Valley leading into the Andringitra Mountains. We stay over at a rustic camp for two nights.

DAY 10: HIKE INTO ANDRINGITRA MASSIF (B,L,D)

Several tours are available as the ascent of Mount Tsaranoro. After villages, rice fields and hills we reach a sacred forest around which entwines a story. This area is well known for many lemurs like the lively Catta lemurs. Today we walk through the woods to traditional villages in secluded valleys. The mountains are volcanic in origin. It consists of strongly fissured granite. The Andringitra massif is extending in a length of 100 km. We appreciate spectacular views over this ancient landscape.



DAY 11: TSARANORO – RANOHIRA (B,L,D)

- About 60 km cycling, including 20 km dirt road ●

We ride back to the tarred road to Ankaramena, which is well known for its delicious mango and papaya fruits. In our support vehicle we drive to Ihoisy and from there we continue to the plateau of Horombe. To get a better impression of this amazing landscape, we ride the last 20 km to our lodge on the edge of the Isalo National Park.

DAY 12: ISALO NATIONAL PARK (B,L,D)

- About 32 km cycling, including 20 km dirt road ●

After a short ride on tarmac, we will head onto a beautiful sandy path to the national park.

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 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 hope to see lemurs and enjoy the spectacular views of the region. Later we will have the opportunity at, 'Piscine Naturelle' to take a bath. After our hike we cycle to the 'Maison du Tourisme' which is a few kilometres along the RN7. From here we have a good view of the Isalo Mountains. Here our bike tour ends.

DAY 13: RANOHIRA – TOLIARA – IFATY (B,L,D)

We take the support vehicle to Tulear . On the way we see impressive baobab trees which are scattered in this wild environment. We also have a look to the tombs of the Mahafaly and Antandroy.

The area around Tulear is the home field of the Vezo ethnic group. They earn their living by fishing. After a short stop in the town we drive to Ifaty, a small fishing village. This invites the warm Indian Ocean for a swim. In the evening we forget all the hardships of our journey through Madagascar and celebrate the end of our bike ride. . After dinner your tour manager will leave you.



DAY 14 & 15: IFATY (B)

Days spent relaxing and swimming .

If you like to see more of the unique plant life take a walk to a nearby Nature Reserve - The Spiny Forest, this is known for the variety of Didieraceae, Adansonia, and Euphorbia and Baobab trees.

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.



DAY 16: FLIGHT HOME (B)

Transfer to Tulear Airport and return flight to Tana. Trip ends. We can arrange for an additional nights accommodation.

Important Information




INCLUDED

- 🍽️ All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- 💧 Mineral water during cycling
- 👤 English-speaking tour manager from day 1 – day 13
- 🏨 Hotels in double or twin rooms
- 🗺️ Local guide

NOT INCLUDED

- International flight
- Internal flight
- Meals other than mentioned
- All other drinks
- Mineral water on non-cycling days
- Personal expenses
- Additional beach activities



-  Mechanic (with a minimum of six cyclists)
-  All cars and buses, All transfers
-  Entrance fees in the parks

Accommodation

The proposed hotels, lodges and guest houses:

(If you are arranging a private trip, we can upgrade the hotels).

On this trip we have opted for smaller, simpler hotels and lodges. The Hotels are chosen by location and are simple middle class hotels or rustic lodges with basic facilities. All have a private bathroom with shower and toilet. The standard of accommodation is not the same as in Europe.

- **Antananarivo, Orchid** Hotel is ideally situated five minutes from Ivato airport making it a perfect hotel for one night stays or early morning departures. Built on two floors with elevator access, the rooms is spacious with has a/c, modern bathrooms, mini bar, TV, telephone, Wi-Fi, safe. Most of the rooms have impressive views over the rice paddies. Restaurant and a large terrace with great views and a huge moon shaped swimming pool. Adjacent to the pool is a gym.
- **Antsirabe, H1** New, comfortable hotel in Antsirabe. We profit from modern furnished rooms with satellites TV. From here we can get with few steps or by Pousse Pousse in the city centre. But also the lively northern part of the town is worthwhile to stroll around.
- **Ambositra, Artisan**, charming hotel a bit out of Ambositra, surrounded by a garden. The interior decoration has been designed in according to Zafimaniry artwork and sculpturing. The hotel offers rooms equipped with hot showers and facilities.
- **Ranomafana, Cristo**. The hotel is situated on the hill of Manerinerina directly on Namorona river that flows through the National Park. The bungalows and rooms are well furnished. You will find everything you need for a pleasant stay.
- **Sahambavy, Lac Hotel**. The hotel is beautifully situated on the shores of Lake Sahambavy, approximately in the middle of Madagascar, at the foot of a hill. Comfortable rooms and charming bungalows, some of them scattered on stilts, in a tropical garden.
- **Ambalavao, Aux Bougainvillées**, A good choice for those seeking for some comfort. Nice, clean rooms with a good restaurant. The hotel shares the same grounds as the Antaimoro paper factory so you can enjoy watching at the manufacturing of the traditional art.
- **Tsaranoro, Tsara Camp** Spacious tents. Each tent is equipped with two beds and a bedside table. There is also the possibility to hang up clothes. Behind each tent there is a small bathroom with an outdoor shower and camping facilities. There are lanterns and candles in the evening . In the centre of this place for relaxing there is a large tent with a restaurant and lounge area. Typical of the region flora and fauna can be explored near the camp.
- **Ranohira, the Orchidée de l'Isalo** is perfectly located in the centre of Ranohira. Massive stone walls, marble floors and original decoration give the rooms their comfort and character. You will feel like sleeping in a medieval castle. The nearby restaurant Le Zebu is affiliated.
- **Toliara-Ifaty, La Mira de Madiorano** Nice bungalow complex overlooking the sea especially busy in the morning. The attractive bungalows are bright and airy. They are built in a traditional style. The hotel is surrounded by a large garden.

OR

- **Toliara-Ifaty, Belle Vue**. Located right in the dunes, the well-appointed hotel enchants its guests with a breath-taking view over the lagoon of Ifaty. It has bungalows type, Waterfront ', with the typical architecture with



thatched roofs. The bungalows have a private terrace and are right on the beach. There are also rooms in the main building.



Pioneer Expeditions
4 Minster Chambers • 43 High Street • Wimborne • Dorset • BH21 1HR
t 01202 798922 • e info@pioneerexpeditions.com

Mad07