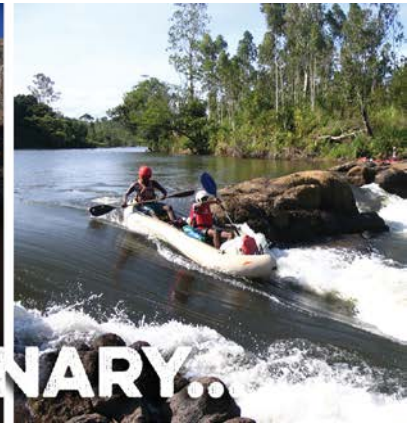




MADAGASCAR

Mountains & Rivers - Pic Boby to the Sea

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY..

ITINERARY

Madagascar Mountains & Rivers • Pic Boby to the Sea

13 DAYS • 12 NIGHTS

**Antananarivo – Lemur Forest – Tsaranoro Valley – Andringitra
– Antanifotsy – Ankarimbelo – Manakara –
Ambohitra – Antsirabe**

This itinerary can be tailored to suit your exact requirements

HIGHLIGHTS

- Summitting and conquering Pic Boby – Madagascar's highest climbable mountain
- Experiencing the incredible Rural highlands & Malagasy backcountry by trekking the wilderness
- Become fully immersed in Madagascar's dense tropical rainforest - truly off-the-beaten-track
- Participating in a thrilling paddle down to the Indian Ocean

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Trekking and Rafting Adventure
Tour Start	Antananarivo
Tour End	Antananarivo
Accommodation	Hotel, Camping, Bungalow
Included Meals	13 Breakfasts, 12 Lunches, 12 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Difficult

THE MAGNIFICENT MADAGASCAR DESCENT



This is an unforgettable trek through this mysterious land. Long series of adventures from the dry western side of the island to the moist eastern tropical rain forests while summiting Madagascar's second highest mountain in the country at 2658m – the mighty Pic Boby. This is not an easy stroll through gentle backcountry. We're tackling the steepest terrains on sometimes poorly marked trails, the pace has to be steady with long days on the trails, mostly camping out, we could face some serious white-water, so not for the feint hearted! That doesn't mean you need Indiana Jones type of profile, but be ready to get out of your usual comfort zone - The price for an exceptional adventure, something you won't ever forget.

MADAGASCAR *an overview*

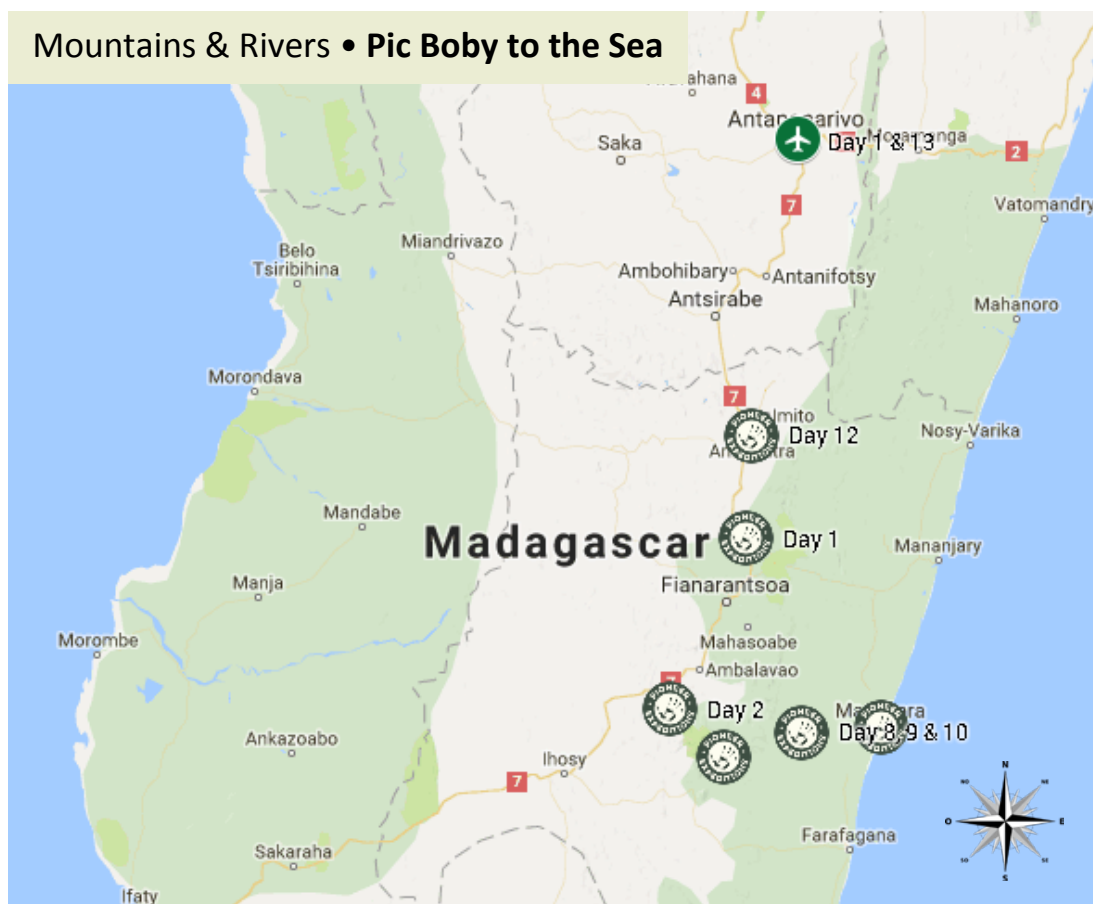
Madagascar is a one-off; there is no other place like it. Its landscapes, animals and plants are simply extraordinary! Near the equator with an astonishing array of habitats, ranging from rainforests to deserts and from mountain tops to mangrove swamps, it is one of the most important countries for biodiversity 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.

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 & begin our journey in Ambohimahasoa

After arriving in Antananarivo we will head to Ambohimahasoa. 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).

An ecotourism site situated in the Highlands of Madagascar, the Lemur forest is easily accessible, located beside the N7! In the lemur forest, there is plenty of unspoilt nature, a huge variety of birds, reptiles and orchids and not to forget the 6 species of lemurs and 7 species of chameleons that reside there. There is so much wildlife to see, amongst the beautiful rainforest and the goal of the site is to restore and protect fauna and endemic flora.



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
D



Distance:
360km (6+hrs drive)



Activity:
Drive & Wildlife

Day 2: Exploring Lemur's Forest and setting off to the spectacular Tsaranoro Valley

This morning we will explore the forests. Several species of lemur can be found here including the Milne Edwards Sifaka. In the afternoon we will drive to Tsaranoro.

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 Tsarasoa, which is 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:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
165km (4hrs Driving)



Activity:
Wildlife, Driving,
Culture



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DAY 3: Roaming the sensational natural beauty of **Andringitra Massif**, en-route to **Pic Boby**

We will spend today exploring this stunning area on foot and meeting all the locals. A full 6hr hike with steep trails and great boulder gardens on the way to Pic Boby.



Overnight:
Camping



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Varies (6hr Hike)



Activity:
Trekking and Wildlife

DAY 4: Taking on the mighty **Pic Boby** and trekking towards **Andriampotsy & Antanifotsy**

Today will we experience a full day crossing highlands, rural backcountry, rice fields, zebu herds, small clusters of mud red houses and great mountainous backgrounds.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D

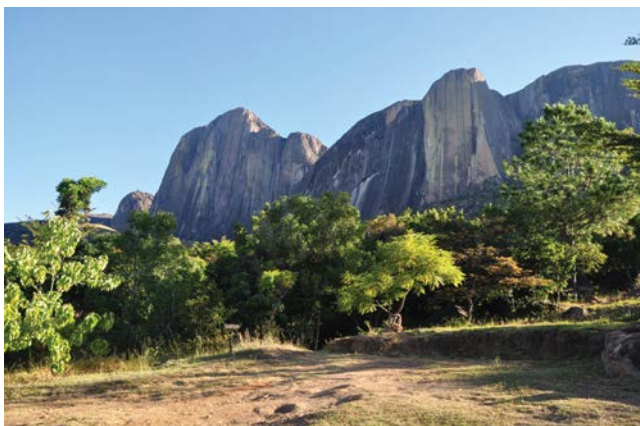


Distance:
Varies (5-6 hour hike)



Activity:
Trekking

DAY 5: Trek across the magnificent Highlands



We will spend most of the day under the forest canopy, the path gets more complicated with branches and muddy passes. Tonight we will camp at the end of the forest.



Overnight:
Camping



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Trekking



DAY 6: Delve further into the wilderness with completely off-the-beaten track **trekking**.

Today we will reach the eastern rainforest limit and will have to dive in, hardly following overgrown trails.



Overnight:
Camping



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Trekking

DAY 7: Trekking through the dense **Eastern Rainforest**



That's a full day deep in rain forest and muddy/slippery/steep trails. Somehow we might reach the edge of it and merge in a spectacular circus of waterfalls.



Overnight:
Camping



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Trekking

DAY 8: A laid-back last day of trekking to reach **Ankarimbelo**



We will begin trekking at a more relaxing pace to reach the village of Ankarimbelo and ready ourselves for the next leg of the journey. Tonight we will sleep on a sandy beach along Matatana River.



Overnight:
River Beach Camping



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Trekking



DAYS 9 & 10: A thrilling paddle down the unexplored **Matatana River**

We will be experiencing two full days on the Matatana River. If you have never paddled before you'll have to carry/line the boats on quite a few occasions. The rapids are not excessively difficult but a few ones do need a bit of experience and/or good self control. The river remains mostly navigable for most and we can eventually set the less experienced ones with a guide. Some longer portages will be handled by locals.



Overnight:
Camping



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Rafting

DAY 11: Concluding our epic river journey and heading to **Manakara** on the coast

We reach a potential pull out about midday and literally stuff the whole expedition in the back of a lorry. The tracks take us down to Vohipeno on the east coast and off to Manakara. Hotel Parthenay will be most welcome after those long nights out.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Depends (Drive along tracks)



Activity:
Rafting & Personal Preference

DAY 12: Making our way to the woodcarving town of **Ambositra**

Today we will drive back 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:
300km (5hr Drive)



Activity:
Drive and Culture

DAY 13: Back to **Antananarivo** via **Antsirabe** + **End of Trip**

We can enjoy a stroll for a couple of hours before setting off and discover the woodworks of local craftsmen. We'll have an early lunch in Antsirabe before heading back to Tana in time for your flight home.

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.



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
B, L



Distance:
275km (5+hr Drive)



Activity:
Culture and 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.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Included

- All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- Accommodation as described
- Tea/ Coffee / Water while camping
- All equipment
- Porters
- English speaking guide from day 1 – day 13
- All transfers
- All entrance fees
- All camping equipment

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	Ambohimahasoa	Camp	<i>Lemur Forest Camp Lalatsara</i>
Night 2 & 3	Tsaranoro & Andringitra	Camping	N/A
Night 4	Andringitra	Hotel	<i>Hotel Tranogasy</i>
Night 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10	Trekking & Matatana River	Camping	N/A
Night 11	Manakara	Hotel	<i>Hotel Parthenay</i>
Night 12	Ambositra	Hotel	<i>Hotel L'Artisan</i>



Pic Boby to the Sea EXTENSION EXAMPLE

Feel free to **contact us** for more information on all of our Madagascar Extensions. Alternatively, browse through our extension document, available from our website.

1. Heading West – Isalo National Park & Ifaty Extension

Why not extend this trip with a visit to one of Madagascar's other amazing National Parks – Isalo, as well as a relaxing, paradise ending in the stunning coastal resort of Ifaty, to peacefully unwind after your adventure.



(Email us at info@pioneerexpeditions.com for costings and more information on this extension, as well as even more extension ideas)



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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



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activity Duration	7+ hours per day
Season	April through to December
Best Time To Go	September - December
Group Size	2-8 people
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.
Group Departures	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	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 'difficult level' (7 + hours of activities per day). This means you will need more than a basic level of fitness and some specific training may be required.

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.

