



NORTH COAST ADVENTURE

Exploring and Island Hopping

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY...

ITINERARY

Madagascar • North Coast Adventure

13 DAYS • 12 NIGHTS

Antananarivo – Montagne des Français – Amber Mountain National Park - Ankarana - Ankify – Nosy Be and Surrounding area – Antananarivo

This itinerary can be tailored to suit your exact requirements

HIGHLIGHTS

- Trek through the striking alien-like fields of spiky tsingy in Ankarana. A geological phenomenon and a sight to behold.
- Uncover the thriving wildlife, crater lakes, waterfalls and rich rainforest of Montagne D’ambre, known as the region’s water tower.
- Enjoy a truly off the beaten track dhow/ pirogue safari – Island hopping around the Nosy Be archipelago.

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Adventure Expedition
Tour Start	Antananarivo
Tour End	Antananarivo
Accommodation	Hotel, Camping, Bungalow, Tree Bungalow
Included Meals	12 Breakfasts, 9 Lunches, 10 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Medium
Group Size	Max. 8 people (No Single Supplement*)

EMBRACING THE RUGGED NORTH COAST



An action packed adventure through the wild North West. You’ll trek, canoe, bike and observe wildlife before finishing your trip with a truly unique island hopping experience that includes wild camping on tropical beaches. Starting from the red highlands, this adventure will allow you to go truly off the beaten track; being guided through the remotest of villages and national parks, witnessing striking landscapes as well as spotting the enchantingly unique Madagascan wildlife.

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: Flight to Diego before visiting the dry forest of Montagne Des Français

This morning you will transfer to the airport for your flight to Antsiranana (Diego Suarez). Upon arrival in Diego you will be met by your driver and guide who will be with you for the next 7 days and will head to Montagne des Français, just a short 1 ½ hour by road, but a very different environment.

*The Montagne des Français reserve protects deciduous dry forest characteristic of the north of Madagascar. Much of the forest is on a calcareous massif that has been eroded into Tsingy. This is one of the best places to see one of the most beautiful baobabs, *Adansonia suarezensis*. Montagne de Français is part of the larger Ramena protected area complex and is home to fish eagles and crowned lemurs.*



This afternoon we will have a trek in this area to discover some of the inhabitants.

Tonight we will have a unique experience here as we will overnight in the tree bungalows – literally huts built in trees!



Overnight:
Tree Bungalows



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
40km (1 ½ hrs Driving)



Activity:
Exploring and Wildlife



DAY 3: Montagne Des Francais – Jofreville

This morning is at leisure. There are plenty of activities you can choose to partake from climbing, mountain boarding, slack lining, adventure course etc, or another trek. You can discuss your preferences with your guide (some of the activities are charged for additionally). This afternoon we will head Jofreville (and the Montagne d’Ambre – the Amber Mountain).



Overnight:
**Tree
Bungalow**



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
n/a



Activity:
At Leisure

DAY 4: Amber Mountain

Today we will set out on a trek to explore the Amber Mountain

This stunning National Park is comprised of a huge tropical forest with waterfalls and volcanic lakes. This islet of verdant forest is a haven of freshness that escaped the stuffy heatwave of this region. There are numerous animals that inhabit this national park including the ring-tailed mongoose, the fossa and 8 lemurs (which are not always easy to see). It is also home to 75 bird species – 35 of them are endemic, 60 reptiles (from leaf tailed gecko’s to a number of chameleon species, 35 frogs and 40 butterflies. Due to its relative proximity to Diego, this park can get quite busy (by Madagascan standards) in the high season, however it is really worth visiting.

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Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
1 ½ hrs driving



Activity:
Wildlife and Exploring

DAY 5: Ankarana

This morning we will head to Ankarana. This afternoon we will visit Perte de Riviere – which is the gateway to a series of caves leading to the ocean.



Overnight:
Lodge



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Approx. 4 hours



Activity:
Trekking and Wildlife



DAY 6: Exploring and unearthing the striking landscapes of Ankarana Reserve



Today will be spent exploring this amazing park. The trails are not easy but are feasible for anyone with a moderate level of fitness and we recommend visiting this park in the dry season (May-Nov).

Ankarana Special Reserve covers 18,220ha and is known for its limestone karst pinnacles called Tsingy along with its extensive cave system and network of underground rivers. Ankarana possibly has the highest density of primates of any forest (with 11 species of lemurs being found here) and here you may see the crowned lemur, Sanford's brown lemur, Perrier's (black sifaka) lemur, the northern sportive lemur and dwarf lemurs as well as a variety of chameleons and leaf-tailed Uroplatus gecko and great flora.

You will hopefully get a chance to cool off in the lodge swimming pool at the end of a hard days trekking.



Overnight:
Lodge



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Trekking and Wildlife

DAY 7: Hit the road towards the Ankify

This morning we head to Ambanja and then onwards to Ankify. After lunch in Ambanja, we will take to our mountain bikes as we explore this area and the Cacao plantation on 2 wheels. At the end of the cycle we will head to the coast of Ankify (a short hop – approx. 20 minutes). Tonight we will stay at lovely beach bungalows.



Overnight:
Lodge



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
160km (5hrs Driving)



Activity:
Culture & Cycling

DAY 8: ANKIFY

Today we will take to our kayaks and depending on the river depth, will either explore the Sambarino River, or the mangroves around the coast.

Your afternoon is at leisure and you will stay once again at the beach bungalows.





Overnight:
Lodge



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
1 hr boat ride



Activity:
Boat ride. At leisure

DAY 9: ANKIFY - NOSY-BE

Your driver and guide will leave you this morning as a private boat will take you to Nosy Be. Upon arrival you will be met by a taxi and transferred to your hotel. This afternoon you can relax at your stunning hotel on the beach. At a pre-determined time you will walk along the beach, where you will meet your team who will be accompanying you on your dhow / pirogue safari tomorrow. A debrief will be given before you return to your hotel for dinner.



Overnight Camp



Overnight:
Camp



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
varies



Activity:
**Boat, snorkeling, trek,
relaxing**

DAY 10: NOSY-BE/ANJIABE

First thing this morning you will meet the Alefa Office for breakfast before boarding your Dhow/ Pirogue (depending on number in the group) to explore an area where the sea is the only path. Swimming, snorkelling and a discovery of an incredibly rich and diverse underwater world awaits us.



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Please note the actual itinerary for the next 3 days will be decided by the team following your meeting, but will be something like the following:

After a dhow journey we will land at Anjiabé, a 3km long beach bordered by a semi-abandoned coconut plantation, a site with extraordinary low tide. This is where we will camp for tonight. After a drink and a stunning meal of seafood prepared for us by our chef, we will have the chance to nap, swim and for those who wish, walk trails to observe the many species of birds, mostly endemic to Madagascar. Sunset, cocktails, meals ... And good night!

Nights will be spent wild camping on beaches

	Overnight: <i>Camp</i>		Meals: <i>B, L, D</i>		Distance: <i>varies</i>		Activity: <i>Boat, snorkeling, trek, relaxing</i>
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DAY 11: SNORKELLING AND NATURE WALKS

Depending on the tide we will depart relatively early towards the Island's northernmost archipelago Radama. (approx. a 2 1/2hr crossing). Along the way we will get a chance to swim. Nosy Ambariopôtaka rises to 166 meters and includes a different landscape to last night and we camp facing the majestic Mozambique Channel. In the next bay we tend to find a Sakalava carpenter at work – with one or more shells of dhows resting on a bed of pink and white periwinkles. The whole island is surrounded by a lagoon. Nature walks in the jungle and lazing are the order of today.

	Overnight: <i>Hotel</i>		Meals: <i>B, L, D</i>		Distance: <i>varies</i>		Activity: <i>Boat, snorkeling, relaxing</i>
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DAY 12: Island hopping – Nosy-Be

You will spend morning exploring by boat, snorkeling. After lunch you will head back to Nosy Be where you will stay once again at the lovely beach hotel
Afternoon at leisure

	Overnight: <i>Hotel</i>		Meals: <i>B</i>		Distance: <i>Short Flight</i>		Activity: <i>Leisure, Personal Preference</i>
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DAY 13: Back to Antananarivo or optional extension (e.g. Nosy-Be or Island hopping)

You will transfer to the airport where you will catch the Air Madagascar flight from Nosy Be to Tana. Depending on your time of arrival in Tana you can visit the handicraft market, before transferring to your hotel.

	Overnight: <i>N/A</i>		Meals: <i>B</i>		Distance: <i>N/A</i>		Activity: <i>Flight Home</i>
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DAY 14: 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 14, you can opt to have a day use room &/or driver/guide for the day (not included).

	Overnight: <i>N/A</i>		Meals: <i>B</i>		Distance: <i>N/A</i>		Activity: <i>Onward travel/Flight Home</i>
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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.



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. Please note times given are approximate driving times and do not include stops, the journey times are therefore longer. When driving times are given, this is only an indication. It aims to reflect the actual driving time (and doesn't include stops, lunch, and 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.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Included

- All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- Accommodation as described
- Water during tours
- English speaking guide from day 2 – day 7
- Driver and 4WD from day 2 – day 7
- English speaking guide and boat team from day 9 - 11
- All transfers, ferries
- Internal flight ticket x 2
- All entrance fees
- Camping equipment

Not Included

- International flights
- Meals other than mentioned
- Sleeping bag
- Tips
- Personal expenses
- Alcoholic and soft drinks - drinks in restaurants
- Personal expenses
- Optional tours/activities



ACCOMMODATION *at a glance*

	Location	Accommodation	Example
Night 1	Antananarivo	Hotel	Relais des Plateaux
Night 2 & 3	Montagne des Français	Tree Bungalows	Tree Bungalow in Jungle
Night 4	Joffreville	Hotel	The Litchi Tree
Night 5 & 6	Ankarana	Hotel	Ankarana Lodge
Night 7	Ambanja	Bungalow	Le Baobab
Night 8 & 11	Nosy Be	Hotel	L'heure Bleue
Night 9 & 10	Nosy Be and Surrounds	Camping	
Night 12	Antananarivo	Hotel	Palissandre Hotel



WHAT OUR CLIENTS HAVE SAID...

"I have wanted to visit Madagascar for some time and this trip looked like a wonderful way to do so - I was especially attracted by the range of activities and the small group size. I loved this trip!"

-Catherine

"This has been an amazing trip. We have really loved it. The organisation was superb. The guides completely trustworthy. Food was superb and our safety was paramount when out and about. It is truly away from everything. Thank you"

-N. Morton

"We had a great holiday thank you! We really enjoyed the trip and the company of our guides. The team were fantastic and were completely dedicated to delivery the best service to us. The Alefa boat trip was a sensational experience - luxury with food that was out of this world!"

-J. Faulds

"Our Madagascan trip was excellent. I think your local partners and their knowledgeable freelance guide really made the trip for us. The local company could not do enough for us and I would recommend them. Everything was extremely well organized."

-J. Cosker

"We really enjoyed our trip. Madagascar is fascinating, we loved the parks and the wildlife, and our guides were excellent. The food provided (both by the guides and at the hotels) was of a very high standard, and we liked the mix of hotels - especially the tree house, which was our favourite!"

-Langan / Spauls



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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 Autumn: **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



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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!

Some of OUR NATURALIST GUIDES



MAMY

- 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

- 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

- 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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Activity Duration	2 – 5 hours per day
Season	This region is best explored between May and November
Best Time To Go	April – November in the dry season
Group Size	Max group size 8 (<i>or private trips available upon request</i>)
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	Fixed Group Departures and Tailor Made departures from May throughout November. Alternatively we are able to arrange tailor-made or private departures to suit, and are happy to add extensions.
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.

