



LEMURS, BAOBABS AND BEACHES

South West and Avenue des Baobabs

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY...

ITINERARY

S.W Madagascar • Lemurs, Morondava, Avenue de Baobabs

18 DAYS • 17 NIGHTS

Antananarivo – Morondava – Bekopaka – Kirindy – Avenue de Baobabs – Andasibe – Antsirabe – Ranomafana – Isalo – Ifaty – Antananarivo

This itinerary can be tailored to suit your exact requirements

HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover the famous **Avenue De Baobabs**
- Visit the outstanding **Ranomafana National Park** – home to **12 lemur species**.
- Explore the famous **Andasibe & remarkable Isalo National Parks**.
- Close **unforgettable lemur encounters**. Potential of seeing **Madagascar's largest lemur, the mighty 'Indri'**.
- Experience a perfect ending to your trip in the **stunning coastal town of Ifaty**.

TOUR ESSENTIALS

Tour Style	Nature and Wildlife Tour
Tour Start	Antananarivo
Tour End	Antananarivo
Accommodation	Hotel, Eco-Lodge, Bungalow
Included Meals	16 Breakfasts, 15 Dinners
Difficulty Level	Medium

LEMURS, MORONDAVA, AVENUE DE BAOBABS



Visit the iconic Avenue des Baobabs and explore the wonders of Southern Madagascar experiencing its most diverse environments. We will visit some of the top national parks accompanied by a Malagasy naturalist guide to ensure you have the best chance of witnessing as well as learning about all of the wonderfully unique flora and fauna of Madagascar. The south west is filled with adventure, iconic Madagascan animals, fabulous wildlife watching opportunities, outstanding landscapes, an abundance of culture and gorgeous hidden beaches lining the Indian Ocean; all waiting to be explored, encountered and cherished.

MADAGASCAR *an overview*

Madagascar is a one-off; there is no other place like it. Its landscapes, animals and plants are simply incredible! 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 Southern Madagascar on this exceptional nature guided tour.

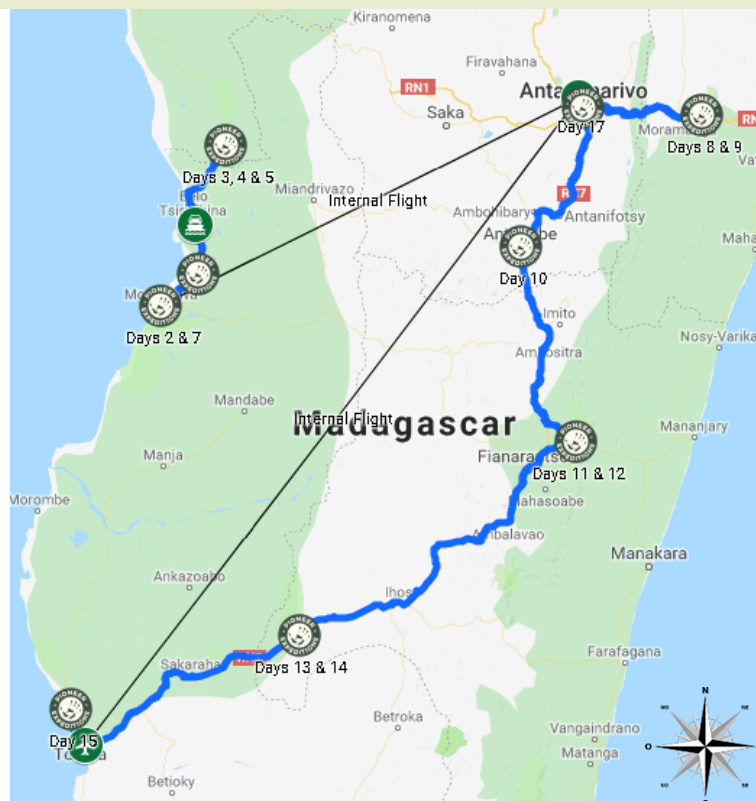
WHY PIONEER EXPEDITIONS?

We are one of the few specialists that really “do” off the beaten track and unique adventures in MADAGASCAR. We are driven by a passion for adventure travel and wildlife and Madagascar is one of our main specialities. We know it inside-out, and continuously collaborate with our local partners and tour guides to ensure that you have the best experiences on your dream Madagascan adventure – this focus is reflected in our uniquely wonderful itineraries. Our experts are on hand whether you are looking for a small group trip or a bespoke holiday. Even better, our small group tours have a maximum of 8 people, making it a much more personal experience. Furthermore, we don't expect you to pay a single supplement, perfect for solo travellers! (*nb. no ss charged as long as you are happy to share a room).

Pioneer work in some of the world's most spectacular, remote and extraordinary places worldwide.

ITINERARY

S.W Madagascar • Lemurs, Monodava and Avenue de Baobabs



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DAY 1: Antananarivo

Upon arrival in Antananarivo you will be met by our driver and transferred to your hotel for the night.

Overnight at Relais des Plateaux.

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!



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
N/A



Distance:
Airport Transfer



Activity:
Arrive in Tana

DAY 2: MORONDAVA

An early morning transfer to the airport in time to take your flight to Morondava. Upon arrival you will meet your guide and transfer to your hotel.

Boasting sandy streets, gigantic trees and situated by the seaside, Morondava is ideal for a relaxing stay and is visited quite often as people come to see the Avenue de Baobab just outside town. There is good birding in Morondava, with the opportunity to observe kingfishers, egrets and other wildlife! The Kirindy Forest Reserve is just 50km north of Morondava and it is dominated by a diverse range of primates and several bird species!

This afternoon/ early evening you can visit the well known Avenue de Baobabs.

The 'world famous' forest of giant baobab trees, the avenue is a prominent group of these trees which line the road between Morondava and Belon'I in western Madagascar. The landscape is very striking. Baobabs can be up to 800 years old and reach 30m in height! The avenue des Baobabs is one of Madagascar's most photographed sights and since 2008 it is an officially protected natural monument!



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,D



Distance:
Short Flight



Activity:
Personal Preference



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DAY 3 : MORONDAVA BEKOPAKA

Today you will spend a full day travelling by 4x4 to the village of Bekopaka. This is an interesting and eventful journey on difficult roads and you have to cross rivers before arriving there.

The Tsingy of Bemaraha National Park in Bekopaka was declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1990. It is known for its unique geography and of course forests of Tsingy which create an interesting, perhaps bizarre looking landscape. The forests of Bekopaka is very much undisturbed and its forests and lakes are home to 11 species of lemur including Decken's Sifaka and an astonishing 90 species of birds and 8 species of reptile.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
9 hours



Activity:
Travelling / Culture

DAY 4 : BEKOPAKA

Today you will visit the stunning Tsingy – classified by UNESCO. You will explore this area for around 2-3 hours.

In the afternoon you will continue to explore Manambolo Canyon by pirogue.

The origin of the Manambolo River is around 80 miles west of Antananarivo. Due to eroded sediment, the river is a deep orange color. The Manambolo canyon is around 45 miles in and is absolutely stunning with colorful cliffs of sandstone and thick deciduous forest. The area boasts Lemurs, including the red fronted brown lemur and Decken's sifaka and there are also several small creeks making the area extremely picturesque. In the lower part of the canyon is a pool and eventually you will arrive at the village of Bekopaka.



Overnight:
**Les Soleil des
Tsingy Hotel**



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
n/a



Activity:
Walking, Wildlife

DAY 5 : BEKOPAKA

A short 4wd transfer takes you to the gate of this mysterious maze of rocks spires. It is truly a wonder to cross those canyons along the adventures trails, steep ladders. You will have your own guide, so you can chat with them about the best route for you in order to avoid some of the heights / rope bridges



Overnight:
**Les Soleil des
Tsingy Hotel**



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
n/a



Activity:
Walking, Wildlife



DAY 6 : KIRINDY

Today you will drive back to Kirindy Reserve. This afternoon you will be able to visit the reserve and this evening can enjoy a night walk within the reserve

Located only an hour from Morondava, Kirindy is a private reserve in the dry deciduous forests; one of Madagascar's most threatened ecosystems. Kirindy is home to the magnificent giant jumping rat, 47 species of birds and seven species of lemur, including the Madame Berthe's mouse lemur, the smallest primate in the world. The fauna is unique and the park is surrounded by the Maharivo and Lampaolo rivers and you will get the opportunity to see plenty of reptiles. One of the popular reasons to visit here is Kirindy's resident Fossa population



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
7 hrs driving



Activity:
Travelling, Wildlife

DAY 7: KIRINDY - MORONDAVA (B,L,D)

Today you will head back to Morondava where you will enjoy an afternoon at leisure. You have another opportunity to visit the Avenue des Baobabs if you wish.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
2 hrs driving



Activity:
Relaxation

DAY 8: Flight to Tana – Transfer to Andasibe

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 specializing in Madagascan reptiles and butterflies, before arriving at the hotel.

This afternoon you will get the 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:
Eco-Lodge



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
8 hrs



Activity:
Transfer and Wildlife

DAY 9: Discovering Andasibe National Park

Today we will explore Andasibe National Park.



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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, D



Distance:



Activity:
Lemurs and Wildlife

DAY 10: Andasibe – Antsirabe

We will set off early this morning for a full day journey to Antsirabe (Via Tana). The driving time is approximately 8 hours, however with stops en-route we will be on the road much longer. We will stop for lunch along the way and enjoy the Malagasy life along the roads.

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:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
Approx. 8hrs drive



Activity:
Exploring and transfers



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DAY 11: Antsirabe to Ranomafana



We will set out after an early breakfast towards Ranomafana National Park. We will stay just outside Ranomafana (just 10 minutes from the park entrance). This afternoon you have the option of visiting the thermal baths in Ranomafana or the park itself, although it will be a little sleeping the in the afternoon.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
Approx. 8 hrs



Activity:
Relax in the thermal baths

DAY 12: Discovering Ranomafana National Park

Exploring 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.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



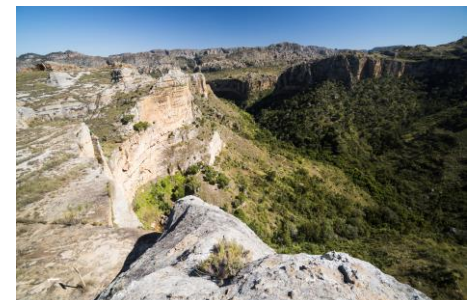
Distance:



Activity:
Lemurs and Wildlife

DAY 13: GOODBYE RANOMAFANA – HELLO ISALO!

Transfer to our hotel near the Isalo National Park. En-route we may get the chance to stop off at a traditional market and pass through quaint villages.



Overnight:
Eco Lodge



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Approx. 10 hrs drive



Activity:
Culture and transfers



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DAY 14: DISCOVERING ISALO NATIONAL PARK

Today we will visit this breathtaking National Park. This extraordinarily unique area of natural beauty is unlike any other place in Madagascar.

Included will be the opportunity to swim in a natural pool with lunch on the trail.

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.



Overnight:
Eco Lodge



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Lemurs and Wildlife

DAY 15: TRANSFER TO IFATY

Today we head to Ifaty and the Indian Ocean. Along the way we will visit Zombiste Reserve

This south-western National Park is known for the huge variety of rare bird species as well as its unique diversity. Zombitse is home to 8 species of lemurs including the Verraux Sifaka (aka. the dancing lemur) and the threatened Fork-marked Lemur. The park also shelters 47% of the endemic birds of Madagascar as well as the local endemic Appert's tetraka bird. Zombitse boasts fantastic flora as well including orchids and ficus making this a stunning national park!



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.



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Upon arrival in Ifaty, your driver and guide will leave you. Your time at the coast will be at your leisure



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
260km (5hr Driving)



Activity:
Beach and Wildlife

DAY 16: Discovering the surrounding fascinations of Ifaty

Today can be spent at your leisure, experiencing what beautiful Ifaty and its surrounding areas have to offer.

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:
Hotel



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
N/A



Activity:
Personal Preference/Beach

DAY 17: IFATY TO ANTANANARIVO

You can choose to extend your stay in Ifaty (see extension options below) or you will have a transfer to Tulear Airport, where you will catch the Air Madagascar flight from Tulear to Tana. We will meet you again at Tana airport and depending on your time of arrival, you can visit the handicraft market, before transferring to your hotel.



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B,



Distance:
Short flight



Activity:
Travel

DAY 18: END OF TRIP

Transfer to the airport in time for your flight home



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:
B



Distance:
Airport transfer



Activity:
Travel



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Included

- All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)
- Water during tours
- Accommodation as described
- Driver / Guide – day 15
- English speaking naturalist guide from day 2 – day 7 ; day 8 – day 15
- All transfers
- All entrance & National Park fees

Not Included

- International flights (These can be arranged through us, if needed)
- Meals other than mentioned
- Alcoholic and soft drinks
- Tips
- Personal expenses
- Optional tours/activities at Beach
- Internal flight tickets x 3



ACCOMMODATION *at a glance*

Accommodation as below, or similar.

	Location	Accommodation	Example
Night 1	Antananarivo	Hotel	Relais des Plateaux
Night 2	Morondava	Hotel	Chez Maggie
Night 3 - 5	Bekopaka	Eco-Lodge	Olympe Du Bemaraha
Night 6	Kirindy	Eco Lodge	Relais du Kirindy
Night 7	Morondava	Hotel	Chez Maggie
Night 8 & 9	Andasibe	Hotel	Sahatandra Hotel
Night 10	Antsirabe	Hotel	Plumeria Hotel
Night 11 & 12	Ranomafana	Hotel	Thermal Hotel
Night 13 & 14	Isalo	Eco-Lodge	Satrana Lodge
Night 15 & 16	Ifaty	Hotel	Le Paradisier
Night 17	Antananarivo	Hotel	Relais des Plateau

ACCOMMODATION *at a glance*

Accommodation as below, or similar.

WE CAN OFFER A HOTEL UPGRADE BELOW- COST: +£350PP

Night 2 & 7	Morondava	Hotel	Palissandre Côte Ouest
Night 3 - 5	Bekopaka	Eco-Lodge	Soleil de Tsingy
Night 8 & 9	Andasibe	Hotel	Andasibe Hotel



WHEN TO GO...

The Road to the Tsingy is only open between April and November.

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
- With the lack of water and food at this time in the South, this does exacerbate the poverty in Madagascar (this is not so obvious in the North)

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 April and December
Best Time To Go	Apr – May, Sept – Nov
Group Size	Max group size 8
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	We have a few group departures between April and December – please see website or contact us for exact dates. Alternatively we are able to arrange tailor-made or private departures 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 'Medium' level (2 – 5 hours of activities per day). This means that you will need an average level of fitness.



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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.

