



## Itinerary

### 14 Day Madagascar: The Land Of Lemurs

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE:** Any extra nights, optional tours or other amendments, will not be visible on this itinerary.

#### DAY 1: Arrive Antananarivo, Madagascar (Thursday)

Upon arrival at Antananarivo International Airport (Ivato), also known as Tana, you'll be warmly greeted by your driver waiting just outside the exit area, holding a sign with your name for easy identification. From there, enjoy a comfortable transfer to your hotel in the heart of the city, allowing you to settle in after your journey. Once checked in, the rest of the day is yours to unwind or explore Tana at your own pace. Whether you wish to relax at the hotel or take a stroll through Antananarivo's bustling streets, the city offers a rich mix of culture, history, and local charm. You might choose to visit a nearby café for a taste of Malagasy cuisine, wander the local markets for artisanal crafts, or simply recharge and prepare for the exciting days ahead.

**NOTE:** *Keep your luggage with you after passport control. Depending on your flight schedule, an additional overnight stay may be necessary.*

**MEALS:** Nil

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Belvedere or similar

#### DAY 2: Antananarivo ~ Ampefy

Begin your day with a hearty breakfast at around 7:30 am, preparing for a scenic adventure along National Road 1, heading westward into Madagascar's "Wild West." This journey provides stunning views, with plenty of opportunities to stop and capture Madagascar's vibrant landscapes and rural life as you travel through small villages and rolling hills.

After about 21 km, pause at the Lemurs' Park, a 5-hectare sanctuary dedicated to preserving Madagascar's famous lemurs in a natural, open environment. Here, you'll have the unique opportunity to observe seven different lemur species up close as they roam freely. Watch these playful and curious creatures interact in their lush surroundings and capture memorable photos of them in action.

Continuing westward, you'll arrive in the serene town of Ampefy in the afternoon, nestled among lush green hills, volcanic lakes, and cascading waterfalls. Known for its peaceful atmosphere, Ampefy is the perfect place to unwind and take in the natural beauty of the highlands. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure, allowing you time to explore the town or simply relax at your accommodation.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** 155 km

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** 5 hours

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Kintana Fleuron or similar

### DAY 3: Ampefy ~ Faratsiho ~ Antsirabe

Start your day with an early morning visit to either the stunning waterfall or the rare cold-water geysers of Analavory, if you didn't get a chance to see them the day before. These natural wonders provide a refreshing start to your morning, offering breathtaking views of Madagascar's unique landscapes. The geysers, in particular, are a fascinating phenomenon, releasing cool water from deep underground, a rarity among typical hot geysers worldwide.

After taking in the sights, continue your journey through Madagascar's highlands, passing through one of the country's coldest regions on a recently renovated road. As you travel, the route winds through scenic mountainous fields and the quaint town of Soavinandriana. This drive offers plenty of photo opportunities to capture the highland's rugged beauty, dotted with conifer forests and native flora.

The journey also takes you through Sambaina, where the road merges with National Road 7. This region is known for its impressive terraced rice fields, cultivated in intricate steps along the hillsides. These terraces not only support local agriculture but create a stunning patchwork of green on the slopes, showcasing the traditional farming techniques and artistry of the Malagasy people.

Arrive in Antsirabe in the late afternoon, a town celebrated for its thermal springs and lively artisan culture. Check in to your accommodation and enjoy the rest of the day exploring the town or relaxing.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** 155 km

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** 5 hours

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Flower Palace or similar

### DAY 4: Antsirabe ~ Ambositra ~ Ambalakely

Start the day with a guided city tour of Antsirabe, often referred to as the "city of water" due to its abundant hot springs and serene crater lakes. Known for its vibrant energy and strong artisan culture, Antsirabe is a key economic centre in Madagascar. You'll have the opportunity to explore its lively streets, bustling with colourful bicycle rickshaws, a popular mode of transport unique to the city. As you stroll through the town, you'll discover charming local markets, skilled craftspeople, and artisanal workshops showcasing handmade jewellery, zebu horn products, and intricate gemstone work.

After exploring Antsirabe, continue south on National Road 7, travelling along a scenic, winding route toward the town of Ambositra. Nestled amidst lush highland scenery, Ambositra is renowned as the woodcarving capital of Madagascar. Here, you'll have the chance to visit local workshops and witness the Zafimaniry woodcarving techniques, a UNESCO-recognised craft celebrated for its intricate designs and cultural significance. This unique tradition is passed down through generations and remains an integral part of the town's identity.

Following your time in Ambositra, journey onward through rolling landscapes, picturesque fields, and traditional Betsileo villages until you reach Ambalakely, situated about 10 km from Fianarantsoa. Check in to your accommodation and enjoy the rest of the evening at your leisure.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** 230 km

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** 6 hours

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Ambalakely or similar

### **DAY 5: Ambalakely ~ Ranomafana**

Begin the day with an immersive hike, setting out directly from your hotel for a 2 to 4-hour trek to Antsolaitra, a traditional village of the Betsileo ethnic group. Along the way, soak in the scenic highland landscapes and enjoy learning about the Betsileo's unique culture and way of life. The village showcases the typical Betsileo architectural style, featuring homes constructed from natural materials and surrounded by terraced rice paddies that reflect the region's strong agricultural traditions. You'll also spot "valabe," the traditional stables, along with grazing zebu, a vital part of local life.

During your visit, step into the royal house of Prince Ramaharo, a symbol of the village's history and cultural heritage. You'll also explore small, family-run workshops that highlight the local craftsmanship and resourcefulness of the community. Watch as skilled artisans demonstrate blacksmithing, weaving, tyre recycling, and brickmaking by hand. The clay bricks, formed and fired on-site, are used in constructing the village's homes and structures. This visit provides a fascinating window into the daily routines of the villagers, including rice field work, washing clothes by the rivers, and making traditional coal cookers.

After a traditional lunch with local families, hike back to your hotel in Ambalakely and prepare for the journey to Ranomafana, a village celebrated for its thermal springs and lush surroundings.

As dusk falls, join an experienced local guide for an early evening nature walk along the main road just outside the village. Armed with flashlights, you'll venture into the surrounding forest, searching for Madagascar's vibrant nocturnal wildlife. Look out for lively mouse lemurs, chameleons in repose, croaking frogs, and other creatures that come to life after dark.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** 75 km

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** 25 hours

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Chez Gaspard or similar

### **DAY 6: Ranomafana ~ Ambositra**

Your day begins with an early visit to Ranomafana Rainforest National Park, a lush sanctuary spanning over 41,000 hectares along the Namorona River. This vast park is a haven for diverse flora and fauna and is best known for the golden bamboo lemurs, first discovered by the German primatologist Bernhard Meier in 1986. Accompanied by an experienced guide, you'll embark on a three- to four-hour hike through the dense rainforest, trekking over varied terrain that will take you up and down hills, across streams, and through thick vegetation.

Keep your eyes open for sightings of Madagascar's rare and fascinating wildlife. In addition to the elusive golden bamboo lemurs, you may encounter red-bellied lemurs, red-fronted lemurs, and the agile sifakas leaping through the trees. The park's ecosystem is also home to colourful chameleons, vibrant bird

species, and unique plant life, all of which contribute to the rich biodiversity of this rainforest. This invigorating hike requires a good level of fitness and surefootedness but rewards you with breathtaking views and unforgettable wildlife encounters.

After the morning hike, enjoy a brief rest and lunch before heading back to National Road 7 in the early afternoon. Your journey then continues north toward the town of Ambositra, nestled amidst Madagascar's rolling highlands. As you drive, you'll pass through landscapes cultivated by the Betsileo people, master rice farmers who have ingeniously sculpted the land with terraced fields that extend up to high altitudes, creating a stunning mosaic of green across the slopes.

Arrive in Ambositra in the late afternoon. Known as the woodcarving capital of Madagascar, Ambositra is rich in artistry and traditional crafts. Settle in at L'Artisan Hotel or similar for a relaxing evening, where you can prepare to explore more of Ambositra's renowned craftsmanship the next day.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** 215 km

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** 5 hours

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** L'Artisan Hotel or similar

## **DAY 7: Ambositra ~ Antsirabe ~ Antananarivo**

Start your day with a hearty breakfast before immersing yourself in the artistic heart of Madagascar with a visit to a Zafimaniry carving studio in Ambositra. The Zafimaniry people are famed for their intricate woodcarving, a UNESCO-recognised tradition passed down through generations. At the studio, you'll have the opportunity to watch skilled artisans at work, creating intricate patterns and designs inspired by nature, spirituality, and traditional Malagasy symbols. These carvings adorn everything from furniture to decorative items, capturing the unique cultural heritage of the region. Take some time to explore the village, perhaps browsing local crafts or engaging with the artisans to learn more about this fascinating art form.

Leaving Ambositra, journey north along a winding road through Madagascar's highlands, a route that offers stunning views of rural landscapes, vibrant green rice paddies, and terraced hillsides. Your first stop is in Antsirabe, a lively town known for its hot springs and artisanal workshops. Here, you'll have time to explore or take a quick stroll around, experiencing the local charm and culture before continuing on.

The journey then takes you through Ambatolampy, another town known for its unique craft—the traditional art of aluminium smelting, used to create handmade kitchenware. You may choose to make a brief stop here to witness the metalworking skills of local artisans who create pots, pans, and other items using recycled aluminium, employing techniques passed down over generations.

Arrive in Antananarivo, Madagascar's bustling capital, in the evening after a full day's journey through the heart of the highlands.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** 270 km

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** 7 hours

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Belvedere or similar

## DAY 8: Antananarivo ~ Andasibe

After breakfast, set out for a scenic drive along National Road 2 toward Andasibe, home to Madagascar's most famous national park, the Analamazaotra-Mantadia Reserve. The 142 km journey takes you through the island's lush eastern highlands, where green landscapes and glimpses of local village life line the road, making for a scenic and engaging drive.

Midway to Andasibe, stop at a private reptile park, a fascinating introduction to Madagascar's unique small wildlife. Here, you'll discover a variety of reptiles, including chameleons, geckos, and frogs, showcasing the incredible diversity of species found on the island. This stop offers an ideal opportunity to observe these colourful and often camouflaged creatures up close, an experience sure to delight any nature enthusiast.

Before continuing to Andasibe, take a moment to gather everything needed for an outdoor picnic lunch, stopping by a supermarket in Tana to pick up fresh, local ingredients and snacks. Arrive in Andasibe in the early afternoon, where you'll have a chance to settle into your accommodation at Feon'ny Ala Lodge or similar, nestled in a tranquil setting close to the park.

As evening descends, prepare for a memorable night walk with an experienced local guide. With flashlights in hand, embark on a flat, one-hour walk along the main road just outside the park. This nocturnal adventure will reveal the rich biodiversity of Madagascar's night-time forest life. Look for the small, bright eyes of Goodman's mouse lemurs, the fluffy coats of woolly lemurs, and even fat-tailed lemurs weighing in at no more than 50 grams. Alongside these elusive lemurs, you may also spot sleeping chameleons and vibrant tree frogs, all illuminated in the glow of your flashlight.

After an exciting evening immersed in Madagascar's nocturnal world, return to the lodge to relax and prepare for another day of exploration.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** 142 km

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** 5 hours

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Feon'ny Ala Lodge or similar

## DAY 9: Andasibe ~ Manambato ~ Ankanin ny Nofy

After breakfast, embark on a drive along the RN 2 towards Brickaville, passing through Madagascar's lush eastern countryside. This scenic route offers glimpses of the island's landscapes, dotted with small villages, vibrant green vegetation, and glimpses of local life. Upon reaching Brickaville, you'll cross a large railroad bridge, marking the start of an adventure off the beaten path.

From here, switch to a sturdy four-wheel-drive vehicle for the journey along a 7 km dirt road to the small lakeside village of Manambato, situated on the shores of Lake Rasoabe. Upon arrival, take in the peaceful surroundings as you prepare for the next leg of your journey by water.

A motorboat will transport you across Lake Rasoabe and along the Pangalanes Canal, a network of interconnected lakes and rivers that spans Madagascar's eastern coast. This one-and-a-half-hour boat journey is a highlight, offering serene views of the canal's quiet waters, framed by lush greenery and diverse flora and fauna. The canal system, originally constructed as a transportation route, has since become a haven for wildlife and a beautiful gateway to Madagascar's remote areas.

Arrive at the Hotel Palmarium, nestled on the edge of Lake Ampitabe and adjoining a private lemur park. Known as the "Nest of Dreams," this tranquil location allows you to relax and immerse yourself in nature. The Palmarium, powered by a generator that provides electricity from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm, offers rustic yet comfortable accommodations in a stunning natural setting. Spend your evening at leisure, enjoying the peaceful surroundings and preparing for encounters with Madagascar's famous lemurs the next day.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** 125 km on paved roads, followed by 7 km on a dirt road

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** 5 hours PLUS 1 hour 30 min boat transfer

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Palmarium or similar

**NOTE:** *Power supplied by generator from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm*

### DAY 10: Ankanin ny Nofy

Wake up in the tranquil beauty of Ankanin'ny Nofy, surrounded by lush forests, shimmering lakes, and a rich array of wildlife. After breakfast, set out on a guided hike through the private lemur park adjacent to your hotel. This park is home to several species of Madagascar's iconic lemurs, and as you wander through the forest trails, you'll encounter these curious creatures up close. The lemurs, accustomed to human presence, may approach you with inquisitive eyes, allowing for some memorable and close interactions. Among the species you may see are the gentle Coquerel's sifaka, black-and-white ruffed lemurs, and the agile red-bellied lemur, each showcasing unique behaviours and personalities. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon at your leisure, taking in the natural beauty of the surroundings. You might choose to unwind on the lakefront, explore more of the scenic trails on your own, or simply relax at the lodge, soaking up the serene atmosphere.

As dusk approaches, prepare for an unforgettable evening adventure—a boat excursion to a small island to see one of Madagascar's most elusive and rare lemurs, the nocturnal Aye-Aye. Known as the "fingert lemur" due to its elongated middle finger, the Aye-Aye is a fascinating creature with unique adaptations. Watch as these strange and endearing lemurs use their specialised fingers to tap on tree trunks, listening for hollow sounds before cracking open coconuts and other hard-shelled fruits. With only eight known individuals on the island, this encounter provides an incredibly rare glimpse into the life of one of the world's most extraordinary mammals.

If weather conditions are favourable the previous evening, this Aye-Aye excursion may have been arranged for your first night, allowing flexibility in the itinerary.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** N/A

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Palmarium or similar

**NOTE:** *Power supplied by generator from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm*

### DAY 11: Ankanin ny Nofy ~ Manambato ~ Andasibe



Begin your day with breakfast surrounded by the peaceful sounds of Ankanin'ny Nofy, taking in the final moments of this enchanting retreat before continuing your journey. Your adventure starts with a scenic boat transfer along the Pangalanes Canal, a journey of approximately 1.5 hours. This tranquil canal ride offers one last opportunity to admire the lush landscapes, watch for birdlife, and catch glimpses of local communities that thrive along this waterway, which has been a vital part of Madagascan culture and transport for generations.

Arriving back in Manambato, a vehicle will be waiting to take you on a picturesque drive to Andasibe, located around 125 km away. The journey takes about five hours, winding through verdant landscapes, rolling hills, and traditional villages that highlight the rural charm of eastern Madagascar. Along the way, you'll pass terraced rice paddies, expansive forests, and roadside markets selling fresh produce, handmade crafts, and local delicacies.

As you approach Andasibe, the lush rainforest landscape becomes even more pronounced, hinting at the rich biodiversity of this area. Andasibe is famous for its diverse wildlife, especially its population of the Indri, Madagascar's largest lemur, known for its distinctive and haunting calls.

Enjoy an evening at leisure, perhaps relaxing at your lodge or taking a stroll around the serene property.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** 125 km

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** 1 hour 30 min boat transfer PLUS 5 hours driving

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Feon'ny Ala or similar

## **DAY 12: Andasibe ~ Antananarivo**

Begin your day early with an exhilarating morning hike through the lush, evergreen forest of Analamazaotra National Park. Starting around 7:30 a.m., this three-hour guided trek along the "Indri 2" trail offers an incredible opportunity to immerse yourself in one of Madagascar's most celebrated natural environments. The hike begins with an uphill section, rewarding you with sweeping views of the dense forest canopy, before leveling off as you continue deeper into the heart of the reserve.

Accompanied by a knowledgeable local guide, you'll explore the habitat of the Indri, Madagascar's largest lemur species, known for its distinctive, haunting calls that resonate through the forest. With a bit of luck, you may encounter some of the 63 Indri families residing here, observing their social interactions and unique behaviors up close. In addition to the Indri, keep an eye out for other remarkable species such as the elegant diademed sifakas, playful brown lemurs, and bamboo lemurs, all adding to the diversity of this enchanting forest.

Analamazaotra is also a paradise for birdwatchers and reptile enthusiasts. Listen to the calls of endemic birds, spot colorful chameleons, and experience the incredible biodiversity of Madagascar's rainforest ecosystem. Your guide will share insights into the park's flora and fauna, offering a well-rounded experience for nature lovers of all interests.

Following the hike, return to your lodge to freshen up before beginning the drive back to Antananarivo. The approximately 150 km journey takes around five hours, allowing you to take in the picturesque highland scenery one last time. Arriving in Madagascar's bustling capital in the late afternoon, check in at Hotel Le Chat'o or similar, where you can unwind and reflect on the day's adventures. Spend your

evening at leisure, perhaps enjoying a meal at a local restaurant or exploring nearby sights.

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING DISTANCE:** 150 km

**APPROXIMATE DRIVING TIME:** 5 hours

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Le Chat'o or similar

### DAY 13: Antananarivo ~ Ambohimanga ~ Antananarivo

Today, delve into the rich cultural heritage of Madagascar with a visit to the historic site of Ambohimanga, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2001. Known as the "Blue Hill," Ambohimanga holds great significance as the sacred city of the Merina people. Located atop a hill 1,468 meters high, this ancient royal city offers panoramic views over the capital of Antananarivo and the surrounding landscapes. The serene beauty of this hill and its surrounding forested areas provides an ideal backdrop for reflecting on Madagascar's fascinating history and traditions.

Ambohimanga was once the residence of King Andrianampoinimerina, the most influential of all Merina kings, who ruled during the 18th century. Under his reign, this fortress-like city was a sacred site, its seven gates protected from foreign entry. To maintain its sanctity, a massive, polished stone slab—nearly circular in shape—was rolled in front of the main gate each evening to close off the city, safeguarding the privacy and security of its royal inhabitants. The legacy of Ambohimanga endures in the rich tales of ancient Merina royalty, and the impressive gates still stand as a testament to this historical period.

As you explore, your guide will share stories of the Merina's past, their rituals, and the city's unique architecture, which blends spirituality with practicality. Wander through the royal compound, discovering the sacred bathing pools, ceremonial spaces, and age-old relics that provide insight into the lives of Madagascar's ancient rulers. In the afternoon, return to Antananarivo, where you may have some free time to shop for last-minute souvenirs or relax before your departure. Depending on your flight schedule, a transfer will be arranged to take you to the airport later in the evening or overnight for your journey home, ensuring you depart with a rich understanding of Madagascar's history, culture, and natural beauty.

**NOTE:** *Depending on your flights, you may be transfer to the airport for an overnight departure.*

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Le Chat'o or similar

### DAY 14: Depart Antananarivo (Wednesday)

Depending on your flight time, a transfer will be arranged to take you to the airport for your departing flight. We hope your journey through Madagascar has been unforgettable, filled with cherished memories of this remarkable island's landscapes, culture, and wildlife.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

### \*\*\*Sainte Marie Beach Extension\*\*\*

### DAY 13: Antananarivo ~ Sainte Marie (Tuesday)



Begin the day with a transfer to the airport for your flight to Sainte Marie. Upon arrival, enjoy a warm reception and transfer to your hotel. Settle in and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure on this stunning island.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Lakana or similar

#### DAY 14: Sainte Marie

Today, explore the beauty of Sainte Marie Island at your own pace. Take a short boat trip to Ile aux Nattes, a nearby island with stunning white-sand beaches and crystal-clear waters. Relax on the beach, swim, or stroll around this peaceful haven. Back on Sainte Marie, consider hiking through the scenic eastern forests or taking a tuk-tuk or bike ride north to discover more of the island's unique charm. In the evening, unwind with a delicious meal and a relaxing night.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Lakana or similar

#### DAY 15: Sainte Marie

Another day to enjoy Sainte Marie! Start with a visit to the Pirate Cemetery near the capital, Ambodifotatra. Learn about the island's pirate history and enjoy panoramic views from the hillside. From July to September, you might opt for a whale-watching tour to see the migrating humpback whales up close—an unforgettable experience. Spend the rest of your day at leisure, soaking in the island's relaxed atmosphere.

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Dinner

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Lakana or similar

#### DAY 16: Sainte Marie ~ Antananarivo

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight back to Antananarivo. On arrival, return to your hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Feon'ny Ala Lodge or similar

#### DAY 17: Antananarivo ~ Ambohimanga ~ Antananarivo

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**NOTE:** *Depending on your flights, you may be transfer to the airport for an overnight departure.*

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**OVERNIGHT:** Hotel Belvedere or similar

#### **DAY 18: Depart Antananarivo (Sunday)**

Depending on your flight time, a transfer will be arranged to take you to the airport for your departing flight. We hope your journey through Madagascar has been unforgettable, filled with cherished memories of this remarkable island's landscapes, culture, and wildlife.

**MEALS:** Breakfast