



LEMURS, BAOBABS AND BEACHES

South West and Avenue des Baobabs

PIONEER EXPEDITIONS



DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY...

ITINERARY

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

17 DAYS • 16 NIGHTS

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

This itinerary can be tailored to suit your exact requirements

HIGHLIGHTS

TOUR ESSENTIALS

- 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 Style

Nature and Wildlife Tour

Tour Start

Antananarivo

Tour End

Antananarivo

Accommodation

Hotel, Eco-Lodge, Bungalow

Included Meals

14 Breakfasts, 12 Lunches, 14 Dinners

Difficulty Level

Medium

LEMURS, MORONDAVA, AVENUE DE BAOBABES



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?

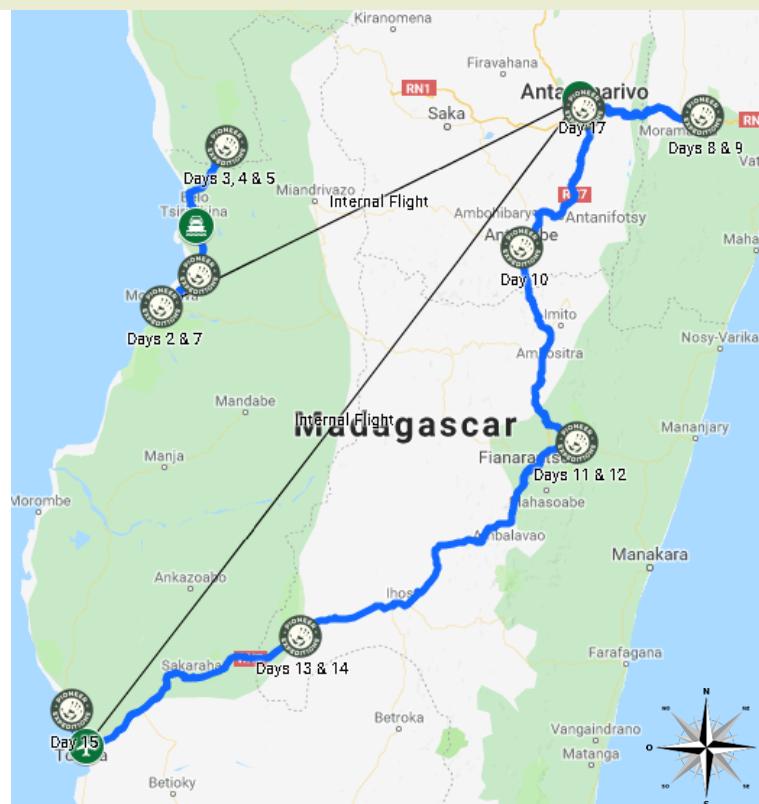
We are one of the few specialists that really “do” off the beaten track and unique adventures in MADAGASCAR. We are driven by a passion for adventure travel and wildlife and Madagascar is one of our main specialities. We know it inside-out, and continuously collaborate with our local partners and tour 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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4 Minster Chambers • 43 High Street • Wimborne • Dorset • BH21 1HR
t 01202 798922 • e info@pioneerexpeditions.com

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: ANTANANARIVO – MAJUNGA

Transfer to the airport in time for your flight to Majunga. Your guide and driver who will be with you (until Diego) will meet you at the airport in Majunga. From here you will drive to Ankafantsika. You will overnight at the bungalows in the national park - these are set discreetly in the forest and face Lake Ravelobe. They are clean, comfortable and simple, and are ideal for us to get an early start in the forest tomorrow (being a 2 min walk from the park entrance).

Overnight bungalow.

Ankarafantsika National Park, set on Lac Ravelobe, is a mixture of deciduous forests and wetlands. It is known for its lakes and for being a haven for lemurs and endemic birds. It is covered in varied fauna, mainly herbaceous and endemic woody plants. It is the home to the beautiful Coquerel's sifaka as well as 7 other species of lemurs (inc. western woolly, fat tailed dwarf lemur, mongoose lemurs) and exceptional birds (including roufous vanga and fish eagle). There is an organized network of paths that is perfect for wildlife viewing.

Here you are able to take night walks to see some of the nocturnal species which are particularly prevalent in this park (including mouse lemur – the smallest primate in the world).



Overnight:
Bungalow



Meals:
B, D



Distance:
Short flight



Activity:
Transfer

DAY 3: VISIT OF THE ANKARAFANTSIIKA NATIONAL PARK

We set off after breakfast to explore this forest on foot, a superb and fauna rich day hike. We will take a picnic lunch to have on the trail in the national park.



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This afternoon you have the option of a boat trip on the lake. After dinner we will have the option of setting out on a night hike again to see some of the nocturnal inhabitants of the forest.

Overnight bungalow.



Overnight:
Bungalow



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Varies

Activity:
Hiking

DAY 4: VISIT OF THE ANKARAFANTSINKA NATIONAL PARK

Another chance to visit the National Park. This afternoon you have the option of a boat trip on the lake.

Overnight bungalow.



Overnight:
Bungalow



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Culture and exploring

DAY 5: Bekopaka



A short 4x4 transfer takes us to the gate of this mysterious maze of rock spires. It is truly a wonder to cross those canyons along the adventure trails, steep ladders.

Overnight at Le Soleil de Tsingy



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Short drive



Activity:
Exploring

DAY 6: Kirindy

After breakfast you leave the village of Bekopaka to join the Kirindy forest (approx. 4hrs drive)



Overnight:
Hotel



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Approx. 4hrs drive



Activity:
Exploring

DAY 7: Avenue De Baobabs & Morondava

Today we head back to Morondava. Stopping at the well known Avenue de Baobabs.



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*Overnight:
Hotel*



*Meals:
B, L, D*



*Distance:
Approx. 1-2hr drive*



*Activity:
Visit Avenue de Baobabs*

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, L, D*



*Distance:
N/A*



*Activity:
Transfer and Wildlife*

DAY 9: Discovering Andasibe National Park

Today we will explore Andasibe National Park.

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, L, 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 7 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.



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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. 7hrs drive*



*Activity:
Exploring and transfers*

DAY 11: Antsirabe to Ranomafana



We will set out after an early breakfast towards Ranomafana National Park (approx. 4hr journey on good roads). 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 Ranomfana or the park itself, although it will be a little sleeping the in the afternoon.



*Overnight:
Hotel*



*Meals:
B, L, D*



*Distance:
Approx. 4hrs*



*Activity:
Relax in the thermal baths*

DAY 12: Discovering Ranomafana National Park

We will set out after an early breakfast towards Ranomafana National Park (approx. 4hr journey on good roads). We will stay just outside Ranomafana (just 10 minutes from the park entrance).



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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, L, D



Distance:
Approx. 20min drive



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. 6hrs drive



Activity:
Culture and transfers



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 are 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.



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Overnight:
Eco Lodge



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Varies



Activity:
Lemurs and Wildlife

DAY 15: TRANSFER TO IFATY

Today we head to Ifaty and the Indian Ocean. This afternoon we can relax at a lovely hotel with bungalows along the beach

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.



Overnight:
Bungalow



Meals:
B, L, D



Distance:
Approx. 4hrs drive



Activity:
Wildlife and Lemurs

DAY 16: IFATY TO ANTANANARIVO

You will have a transfer to Tuléar Airport, where you will catch the Air Madagascar flight from Tuléar 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, D



Distance:
Short flight



Activity:
Travel

DAY 16: END OF TRIP

Transfer to the airport in time for your flight home



Overnight:
N/A



Meals:



Distance:
Airport transfer



Activity:
Travel



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Included	Not Included
<ul style="list-style-type: none">⦿ All meals as described (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner)⦿ Water during tour day 2 – day 9⦿ Accommodation as described⦿ English speaking naturalist guide from day 2 – day 9⦿ All transfers⦿ Internal flight ticket⦿ All entrance & National Park fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 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

ACCOMMODATION *at a glance*

Relais des Plateaux

www.relais-des-plateaux.com



ANKARAFANTSIIKA

Gîte Ankarafantsika



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Vakona Lodge

www.hotelvakona.com



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.



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- ➊ April and May is the perfect time to visit. Great wildlife, great weather and not too many tourists.

Madagascar Winter: June - August (Dry)

- ➋ 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
- ➌ Evenings (especially in the highlands) can get very cool at night (10 degrees C)
- ➍ Good time for seeing lemurs, but due to the cooler weather smaller mammals and reptile will be less active
- ➎ July and August can be busier in the national parks due to school holidays.
- ➏ August and September are ideal for keen birdwatchers to visit Madagascar.

Madagascar Spring: Sept - November (Dry and Hot)

- ➐ September to November is highly popular, as even North Eastern Madagascar is dry now.
- ➑ August and September are ideal for keen birdwatchers to visit Madagascar.
- ➒ 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.
- ➓ 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



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



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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 specialties 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 specialties 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 specialties 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.



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