



Itinerary

15 Day Madagascar: The Land Of Lemurs Tour

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

DAY 1: ARRIVE ANTANANARIVO, MADAGASCAR

Upon arrival at Antananarivo International Airport (Ivato), also known as Tana, you'll be met by your friendly English-speaking guide just outside the arrivals hall, holding a sign for easy recognition. From here, take a comfortable transfer of approximately 15km (about 30–40 minutes, depending on traffic) to your centrally located hotel in the lively capital.

After check-in, enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure. You may wish to relax and recover from your journey or begin discovering the city's charm. Antananarivo is known for its colourful hillside homes, vibrant markets, and a captivating blend of Malagasy traditions and colonial heritage. You could sip a drink at the hotel's rooftop sky bar, dine on a mix of Malagasy and Mediterranean cuisine at the in-house restaurant, or explore nearby streets and cafés.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 15km

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 30–40 minutes

MEALS: Nil

OVERNIGHT: Grand Hotel Urban

DAY 2: ANTANANARIVO ~ ANDASIBE

After breakfast, depart eastward from Antananarivo towards Andasibe, a journey of approximately 145km that typically takes 4–5 hours by car. The drive passes through lush highland scenery, with rolling hills, patchwork rice fields, and charming Merina villages where traditional lifestyles are still very much part of daily life.

En route, stop at the Marozevo/Peyreras Reserve (also known as Madagascar Exotic), a small but fascinating sanctuary renowned for its impressive collection of chameleons, geckos, frogs, snakes, crocodiles, and butterflies. This is a fantastic opportunity to see and photograph many of Madagascar's unique reptiles and insects up close.

Continue onward to Andasibe and visit the Vakona Private Reserve, home to the famous Lemur Island. Here, you'll enjoy unforgettable encounters with several species of lemurs, as well as sightings of crocodiles, water birds, and other endemic wildlife. The reserve offers a rare chance to experience these playful and curious animals in a semi-wild setting.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 145km

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 4–5 hours

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Mantadia Lodge

DAY 3: ANDASIBE

After breakfast, set out to explore the Analamazaotra Special Reserve, part of the Andasibe-Mantadia National Park. This lush rainforest is world-famous as the home of the Indri-Indri, the largest living lemur species, whose haunting calls carry for kilometres through the forest canopy.

Accompanied by an experienced local guide, follow well-marked trails in search of the Indri and other fascinating wildlife, including elegant sifakas, brilliantly coloured chameleons, and a remarkable variety of endemic bird species. The forest is also rich in flora, from wild orchids to towering tropical hardwoods, making this a paradise for nature lovers and photographers alike.

In the afternoon, enjoy free time to relax at your lodge, soak up the panoramic views, or join an optional guided excursion to Mantadia National Park. Less visited and wilder than Analamazaotra, Mantadia offers a more remote rainforest experience, with opportunities to spot additional lemur species, rare plants, and the serene beauty of untouched nature.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: N/A

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Mantadia Lodge

DAY 4: ANDASIBE ~ AKANIN'NY NOFY

After breakfast at the lodge, depart by vehicle for Manambato, a peaceful lakeside village that serves as the gateway to the Pangalanes Canal. The drive offers glimpses of rural life and tranquil countryside before arriving at the lakeshore.

From Manambato, board a motorised boat for a scenic 1.5-hour journey along the Pangalanes Canal. Glide past lush vegetation, traditional fishing villages, and calm waterways, with the occasional sight of local pirogues gliding across the water.

Upon arrival at Akanin'ny Nofy—meaning “Nest of Dreams”—check in to your lodge, beautifully located between Lake Ampitabe and the Indian Ocean. This secluded haven is perfect for nature lovers and those seeking peace and relaxation.

In the evening, after dinner, set out on a guided night walk in the Palmarium Reserve. Accompanied by a knowledgeable local guide, search for the elusive aye-aye, one of Madagascar's rarest nocturnal lemurs, along with other fascinating night creatures.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 132 km drive / 26km by boat

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 5–6 hours

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Hôtel Palmarium

DAY 5: AKANIN'NY NOFY

After breakfast, enjoy a full day dedicated to exploring the Palmarium Private Reserve, set along the shores of Lake Ampitabe. This exceptional reserve is home to a remarkable variety of lemurs and unique flora, offering an intimate wildlife experience in a serene lakeside setting.

On a guided walk through the reserve, encounter several lemur species such as the Indri Indri, Crowned Lemur, Black-and-white Ruffed Lemur, and the lively Coquerel's Sifaka—many of which are surprisingly comfortable around humans. The reserve also shelters rare orchids, carnivorous plants, traveller's palms, and other fascinating endemic species.

Your local guide will share insights into the distinctive ecosystems of the Pangalanes Canal and surrounding rainforest, enriching your understanding of this biodiverse region. There will be ample opportunities for photography, quiet nature observation, and simply enjoying the tranquillity of the reserve.

The afternoon is free to relax at the lodge, swim in the lake, or take a peaceful stroll along the beach.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: N/A

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Hôtel Palmarium

DAY 6: AKANIN'NY NOFY ~ ANTANANARIVO

After breakfast at the lodge, board a motorised boat for a scenic return journey along the Pangalanes Canal to Manambato, taking in the tranquil waterways and lush vegetation one last time.

From Manambato, continue by road towards Antananarivo, travelling once again through Andasibe. The drive reveals Madagascar's changing landscapes—from the dense, green rainforest of the east to the rolling highlands and terraced rice fields of the central region.

This is a full travel day, offering a final glimpse into the country's remarkable diversity of scenery and cultures. Arrive in Antananarivo by late afternoon or early evening and check in to your hotel in the heart of the city.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 26km by boat / 145km by road

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 6–7 hours total

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Grand Hotel Urban

DAY 7: ANTANANARIVO ~ ANT SIRABE

After breakfast at the hotel, depart south towards Antsirabe, travelling approximately 170km (about 5 hours) along a paved road that may have occasional potholes. The journey passes through colourful highland scenery and small traditional villages of the Merina ethnic group, where red-brick houses dot the landscape.

Make a short stop in Ambatolampy to visit a family-run pot and aluminium workshop, where local craftsmen create traditional cooking pots and other items using age-old methods. Continue onwards to Antsirabe, known as La Ville d'Eau (The City of Water), an important agricultural and industrial hub.

Depending on timing, enjoy a short city tour. Founded in the late 19th century by Norwegian missionaries as a sanatorium, Antsirabe was chosen for its cool highland climate and natural thermal springs. Today, it remains a refined and peaceful town with a distinct colonial charm, characterised by wide palm-lined avenues, elegant architecture, and its iconic pousse-pousse (rickshaws) waiting to show visitors the city's highlights. Norwegian missionaries still reside here, operating the city's hospital.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 170km

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 5 hours

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Chambre du Voyageur

DAY 8: ANT SIRABE ~ RANOMAFANA

After breakfast at the hotel, depart Antsirabe and travel southeast into the region of the Betsileo ethnic group, making your way to Ranomafana. The journey covers approximately 247km and typically takes 7–8 hours along a paved road that may have occasional potholes.

Along the way, enjoy stunning highland scenery with plateaus and magnificent terraced rice fields—an agricultural technique introduced from the Far East and now an iconic feature of the Malagasy landscape.

Stop in Ambositra, renowned as the capital of Madagascar's woodcarving and inlay work. This town owes its reputation to the influence of the nearby Zafimaniry people, whose culture and traditions are reflected in the intricate geometric patterns carved into furniture and decorative pieces. Visit some of the small handicraft workshops, where artisans work either in home studios or beneath the shade of trees in their gardens.

Continue towards Ranomafana, passing volcanic lakes and ever-changing landscapes before arriving in the late afternoon or early evening.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 247km

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 7–8 hours

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Thermal Hotel

DAY 9: RANOMAFANA ~ SAHAMBAVY

After breakfast, transfer to the entrance of Ranomafana National Park for a guided visit. The park takes its name from the Malagasy words “rano mafana” meaning “hot water,” referencing the natural hot springs in the area.

Covering 41,600 hectares and ranging from 600 to 1,400 metres above sea level, Ranomafana was established in 1991 to protect its rich biodiversity and unique rainforest ecosystem. The forest is dense at lower altitudes and mountainous higher up, home to endemic plant species such as *Bulbophyllum* orchids, as well as rare wildlife. Highlights include the critically endangered Golden Bamboo Lemur (*Haplemur aureus*), discovered only in 1987, nocturnal aye-ayes, an incredible variety of birds, butterflies, insects, and other endemic creatures. The park’s dramatic landscapes feature waterfalls, streams, and rugged terrain, and it is crossed by the Namorona River. The area is inhabited by the Tanala people, known for honey production and their traditional tavy farming methods.

Visitors can choose from different walking circuits lasting 2–4 hours, depending on fitness levels, and all visits are accompanied by local guides and rangers. The park can be visited year-round, though the dry season (May–September) offers the most comfortable conditions.

After exploring the park, depart for Fianarantsoa, travelling 60km (about 1.5–2 hours) on paved roads. On arrival at the town’s edge, follow a 15km dirt road (around 45 minutes) to reach the village of Sahambavy, renowned for its extensive green tea plantations.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 75km

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 2.5–3 hours

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Lac Hôtel Sahambavy

DAY 10: SAHAMBAVY ~ RANOHIRA

After breakfast, depart for Ambalavao, a town famous for its artisanal production of Antaimoro paper—an ancient craft once made from papyrus, but now using the bark of the avoha tree. The bark is macerated, processed, and decorated by hand with natural dried flowers, creating beautiful sheets of paper still produced using traditional techniques.

Continue south, travelling approximately 276km (about 7–8 hours, depending on road conditions). Along the way, stop at the Anja Community Reserve, a small but rich forest sanctuary where you can observe ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*), chameleons, and other reptiles in their natural environment.

From Anja, the road crosses the vast Ihorombe Plateau, an open grassland landscape with sweeping horizons, before arriving in Ranohira. This small town serves as the gateway to Isalo National Park, renowned for its sandstone massifs, deep canyons, and unique desert flora.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 276km

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 7–8 hours

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Isalo Rock Lodge

DAY 11: RANOHIRA ~ ISALO NATIONAL PARK ~ RANOHIRA

After breakfast, transfer from the hotel to the entrance of Isalo National Park for a full day of exploration. The Isalo Massif, a striking landscape of weathered sandstone formations, deep canyons, and tropical oasis-like valleys, was classified as a National Park in 1962 under the UNESCO convention. Covering 80,000 hectares and ranging from 820 to 1,240 metres above sea level, the park is one of Madagascar's most spectacular natural treasures.

The terrain here features dramatic gorges carved by streams, granite sculptures dating back to prehistoric times, and unique arid-zone flora, including pachypodiums, bonsai baobabs, aloes, and euphorbias. Notable highlights include the Maki Canyon, known for its resident ring-tailed lemurs (*Lemur catta*), and the Natural Pool, a crystal-clear basin fed by a small waterfall and surrounded by pandanus plants and lush palms.

There are several trekking routes of varying length and difficulty, which your guide will help you select based on your interests and fitness level. The classic Namaza Circuit (approximately 5–6 hours) offers the chance to spot Verreaux's sifaka, brown lemurs (*Eulemur fulvus rufus*), chameleons, geckos, and a variety of insects. Along the way, learn about the park's sacred sites, where the Bara people inter their dead in cliffside caves.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: N/A

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Isalo Rock Lodge

DAY 12: RANOHIRA ~ IFATY

After breakfast, travel south towards the coastal city of Tulear before continuing north along the coast to Ifaty. The journey takes approximately 5 hours, with the first hour on paved roads before transitioning to coastal routes.

En route, pass through Ilakaka, a once-quiet village transformed into a bustling sapphire mining centre, home to a diverse, multiethnic community of prospectors. As you travel further south, the landscape changes dramatically—arid vegetation, iconic baobab trees, and spiny forests dominate the horizon. The roadside is adorned with intricately carved wooden aloalo funerary poles, marking Mahafaly tombs and reflecting the deep cultural importance of ancestor worship in Malagasy society.

Upon arrival in Ifaty, visit the Reniala Private Reserve, a 60-hectare protected area in Mangily known for its exceptional biodiversity. The reserve showcases xerophytic plants adapted to the region's dry climate, and is home to a Lemur Rescue Centre, managed by the Reniala NGO, which rehabilitates lemurs confiscated by authorities before reintroducing them to the wild.

After your visit, transfer to your hotel and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure in this peaceful coastal setting.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 265km

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 5 hours

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Paradisier Hotel

DAY 13: IFATY – FREE DAY

Enjoy a full day at leisure in Ifaty, a tranquil coastal retreat on Madagascar's southwest coast. This is the perfect opportunity to relax and soak up the sun, swim in the warm waters of the Mozambique Channel, or stroll along the sandy beaches lined with fishing boats.

If you wish, optional activities can be arranged locally, such as snorkelling, diving, or taking a traditional pirogue sailing trip to explore the nearby coral reefs. The area is also popular for birdwatching, with opportunities to spot rare endemic species in the surrounding spiny forest.

Spend the day entirely at your own pace, making the most of the serene oceanfront setting.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: N/A

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Paradisier Hotel

DAY 14: IFATY ~ TULÉAR ~ ANTANANARIVO

Meet at your hotel for a transfer to Tulear Airport in time for your domestic flight to Antananarivo.

Upon arrival in the capital, you will be met by your English-speaking guide and transferred to your scheduled hotel. Depending on flight timings, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant in either Tulear or Antananarivo. The rest of the day is free to relax or explore the city at your own pace.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 30km then flight the 15km

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 1 hour by road / 1.5-hour flight / 30–40 minutes

MEALS: Breakfast

OVERNIGHT: Grand Hotel Urban

DAY 15: DEPART ANTANANARIVO

After breakfast, meet at your hotel for a transfer to Antananarivo International Airport (Ivato) in time for your outbound international flight. Your guide will assist with check-in formalities before bidding you farewell.

APPROX TRAVEL DISTANCE: 15km

APPROX TRAVEL TIME: 30–40 minutes

MEALS: Breakfast