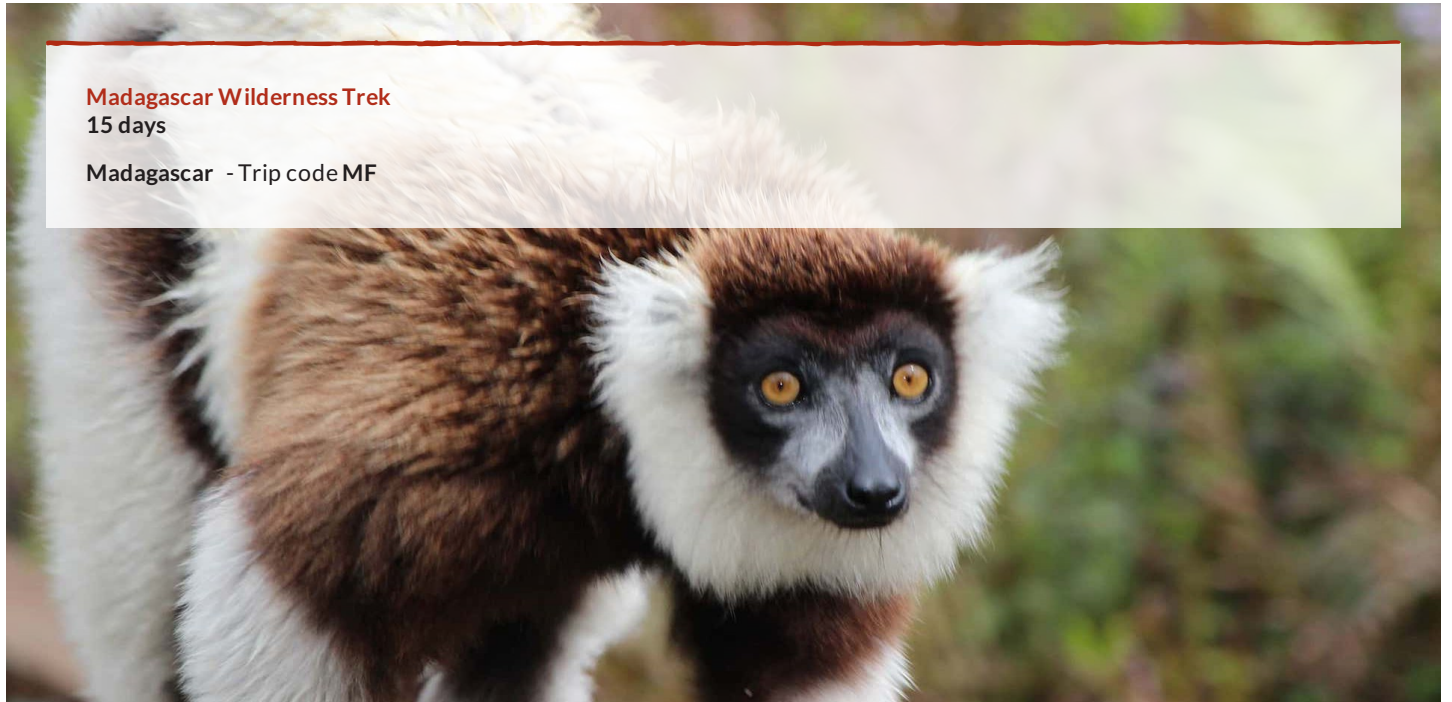


EXPLORE!



Madagascar Wilderness Trek

15 days

Madagascar - Trip code MF

Madagascar Wilderness Trek

Verdant rainforests and dramatic landscapes are the setting for this hiking adventure in Madagascar. Supported by local porters get off the beaten track, trekking through lush tropical vegetation, granite hills, highland meadows, and surreal sandstone landscapes. Ascend Madagascar's highest climbable peak, Pico Imarivolanitra (2,658m). En route spot some of the dozen or so species of lemur living in these protected areas, as well as the unique endemic reptiles and birds, and unusual plants that Madagascar is famous for.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Trek in the rainforest** - A unique ecosystem and home to lemurs, chameleons, amphibians and countless species of birds.
- ★ **Off the beaten track** - Hike in remote national parks.
- ★ **Villages and people** - Interact with the friendly and hospitable local people.
- ★ **Imarivolanitra (2658m)** - Summit the highest point in southern Madagascar.

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Simple

These are often small, family run establishments or campsites which provide a no-frills experience with adequate amenities and service standards. Sleeping arrangements are simple, sometimes with en suite facilities.

WALKING GRADE:

Moderate

For those who are fit and active, these moderate walks are normally on good paths and tracks at low altitude. Days may include some fairly demanding ascents and descents, so previous experience is preferable but not essential.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Tour starts Antananarivo

Our tour starts at our Antananarivo hotel. Built over twelve hills, Madagascar's capital is a blend of the old and new - Old wooden style houses, french colonial buildings and modern offices and apartments.



Accommodation: Hotel Au Bois Vert (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Bus to Ranomafana National Park. Set up camp

This morning we have an early start for our long journey south by charter bus via Antisarabe and Ambositra to Ranomafana National Park. We drive through subtropical highland, the volcanic field around Antisarabe, terraced rice paddies and village communities typical of the Malagasy highlands. We arrive late afternoon and set up camp at a permanent campsite near to the park entrance. Here our cook prepares us an evening meal. There are simple washing facilities. Ranomafana is one of Madagascar's most spectacular national parks. The hills are covered in primary and secondary cloud and rainforest, and there is a great diversity of flora and fauna. These include 12 species of lemur and over 115 species of birds, some of which are endemic to the area. There are also many small streams and waterfalls running through the park, joining the Namorona River as it flows off the highlands and into the valley.



Accommodation: Manja Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel

Single room available





Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 3 - Hike through the rainforest. Look for lemurs

Early this morning, with porters carrying our overnight bags, we hike into the forest looking for local wildlife including lemurs. If we are extremely lucky we will see the endangered golden bamboo and greater bamboo lemurs. It was the discovery of the rare golden bamboo lemur here that persuaded the government to create Ranomafana National Park in 1986. We stop for a picnic lunch before heading into the primary rainforest where we stay at another permanent campsite. This is a small campsite in a forest clearing with simple washing facilities. Again our cook will prepare us a hearty evening meal. Our wildlife walk covers a distance of 10 kilometres over approximately six hours. The terrain is hilly rainforest and the walk is mainly on unmade forest trails.



Accommodation: Ranomafana Campsite (or similar)



Simple Camping



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 4 - Wildlife trail and thermal baths at Ranomafana

This morning we take another wildlife walk in to the forest hoping to see more animal species, including the black-and-white ruffed lemur which can only be found in this primary forest area. We then hike out of the forest area along the Varijatsy Trek Circuit to the village of Ranomafana on the banks of the Namorona Rive ending at the thermal baths and swimming pool - the name Ranomafana locally means 'hot water'. Today's walk covers 12 kilometres over approximately five hours. As yesterday the terrain is hilly rainforest and the walk is mainly on unmade forest trails.



Accommodation: Manja Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - Drive to Ambalavao. Visit the Anja Community Reserve

Today we travel to Ambalavao via the ancient royal city of Fianarantsoa. Ambalavao is a beautiful town, the houses in the 'Old Town' are brightly coloured with steep tiled roofs and wooden balconies. It is also a lively market town, home to the largest cattle market on Madagascar. After an optional lunch we visit the nearby Anja Reserve, a local community reserve, where we hope to see ring-tailed lemurs before returning to Ambalavao for the evening.



Accommodation: Hotel Bourgainvillia (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Drive into Andringitra National Park. Start four day hike

After breakfast we travel by 4WD to Andringitra National Park where we will spend the next three days. On arrival we trek with porters east through several small villages to the first forest campsite, where we have a picnic lunch. The campsite has basic washing facilities - running water but no showers. The park scenery is stunning, encompassing high mountains, granite outcrops and deep valleys, and supports rainforest, mountain forest and high altitude meadow vegetation. As a consequence it is one of the most biodiverse areas of Madagascar with over 1000 species of plants, 100 species of birds, 50 species of mammals (including 13 of lemurs) and 55 species of frogs. However the park covers a large area and much of it is grassland meadows (it is covered in flowers including orchids December to April) so the wildlife isn't always easy to see. Tonight, after dinner, we take a nocturnal nature walk looking for some local animal nightlife in the forest. On our day walk we hike for 5 kilometres over approximately two hours. The path passes through local villages and through fields before meeting the edge of the forest area at the campsite.



Accommodation: Imitso Campsite (or similar)



Simple Camping



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - Wildlife trail. Trek through rainforest and a meadow plateau to higher campsite

Starting early we make a wildlife walk, looking for birds and lemurs, before we begin our trek up to the park's highest campsite, Andriampotsy. We gain altitude on this trek as we pass through the Imitso forest and arrive at a meadow plateau at the foot of the main Andringitra granite outcrop. We have a picnic lunch on the way up and then follow the trail past several streams to the campsite, the base camp for the climb to the highest point of the reserve, Pic Imarivolanitra. The campsite is basic but there is a shower area for bucket showers and toilets. Our cook provides us with an evening meal before we turn in for the night. Today's walk covers 12 kilometres over approximately four hours. We walk mainly uphill along unmade tropical forest paths.



Accommodation: Andriampotsy Campsite (or similar)



Simple Camping



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 8 - Walk to the summit of Imarivolanitra (2,658 m)

Today we walk up between a series of granite boulders to the summit of Imarivolanitra (2,658m), the highest point in southern Madagascar. It is a fairly steady climb on a well-managed path and the views from the top of this mountain down over the park are breathtaking. We then descend along the same paths via last night's campsite to a lower campsite, another basic campsite but with a shower area and toilets. Our walk covers 15 kilometres over approximately seven hours. It is a steady ascent along narrow mountain paths followed by a descent on similar paths down through tropical forest.



Accommodation: Belambo Campsite (or similar)



Simple Camping



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 9 - Travel to Isalo National Park

After walking to the park entrance we return by 4WD to Ambalavao, and then head south west by charter bus to Isalo National Park where we stay in Isalo Ranch Hotel. This hotel is on the edge of the Isalo sandstone massif where the dry forest is home to sifaka, ring-tailed lemur and brown lemur. From the hotel we can see the sandstone hills that have been eroded by nature to form deep gorges and bizarre shapes. Our morning walk out of Andringitra National Park covers 5 kilometres over approximately two hours. We descend down to the park entrance on unmade forest trails and access roads.



Accommodation: Isalo Ranch Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - Wildlife Trail. Swim in natural pools

Isalo offers a totally different landscape from either Ranomafana or Andringitra. The main massif is a huge area of sandstone eroded into deep gullies on the eastern side. There are patches of dry forest throughout the reserve which are home to lemur groups although they are shy and rarely seen. The temperatures are much hotter and plant life reflects this with moisture retaining species such as aloes and the extraordinary dwarf baobabs. After a morning wildlife trail we walk with our porters through the sandstone massif of Isalo to natural swimming pools and return to Isalo Ranch. Today's walk covers 8 kilometres over approximately four hours. We walk along uneven sandstone paths.



Accommodation: Isalo Ranch Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - Hike out of park. Drive to Ifaty Beach via Zombitse Park

This morning we descend down from our campsite to the park entrance. We then drive west to Toliara. En route we stop at Zombitse National Park, which despite years of slash and burn farming in the area, hosts an area of dry deciduous forest. This harbours a wide variety of wildlife including several lemur species and the elusive fossa (a cat-like mammal endemic to Madagascar), as well as many birds and reptile species. Throughout the forest are magnificent baobab trees. From Toliara we continue to Ifaty Beach, a small resort on the west coast, our base for the next two nights. Our morning walk out of Isalo National Park covers 4 kilometres in approximately two hours. We walk along unmade park trails.



Accommodation: Hotel Solidaire (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Free day in Ifaty Beach

Today is free to relax or explore the area. Ifaty Beach is a huge sandy bay which looks out over a lagoon protected by a barrier reef up to seven kilometres from the shore. Traditional fishing villages are scattered along the bay and fishing is still done in sail powered outrigger canoes. There is an option to visit the reef for snorkelling. There is also an excellent forest walk in the Reniala Reserve just inland from the beach area, where strange spiny forest can be found and some of the most attractive of the endemic bird species, such as the long-tailed ground roller, sub-desert mesite and sickle-billed vanga.



Accommodation: Hotel Solidaire (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 13 - Fly to Antananarivo

Today we fly from Toliara to Antananarivo airport from where we transfer to our hotel. The time of the flight varies so the rest of the day is free to relax.



Accommodation: Hotel Au Bois Vert (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 14 - Day walk in the highlands and villages around Antananarivo

This morning we transfer to Ambohitrabiby Hill, on the outskirts of Antananarivo, by bus and take a gentle walk to the top of this sacred hill. The walk takes us through local highland villages and rice paddies, learning about local silk weaving along the way before returning to Antananarivo in the afternoon. Our walk covers 6 kilometres over approximately three hours. We walk along simple footpaths.



Accommodation: Hotel Au Bois Vert (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 15 - Tour ends Antananarivo

Our tour ends in Antananarivo, after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCES



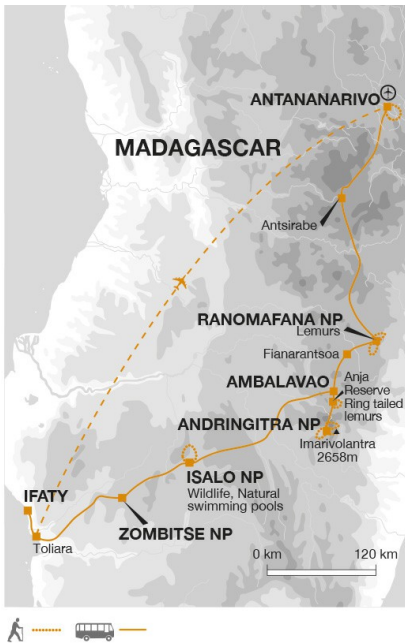
Walking grade

Moderate

Trek details

Walks on 9 days for between 2 to 7 hours. Our maximum altitude is 2,685m. We have graded this tour as moderate.

Optional Walks



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 14
Lunch: 8
Dinner: 8



Transport

Flight
Minibus



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)
Porter(s)
Ranger(s)



Accommodation

4 nights simple camping
8 nights standard hotel
2 nights simple hotel

Trip information

Country information

Madagascar Holidays & Tours

Climate

The climate is tropical, but cooler in the highlands (dropping as low as 5°C at night in July/August in Antananarivo and Andasibe). The dry season is March to October continuing into November in most areas. The east coast is best March-May and September-November, January-March is cyclone season. The south west area is hot, dry and semi-arid. March-April is the best time for flowers and reptiles. November (spring) is generally the best time for wildlife and birds, but lemurs can be viewed all year round. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Time difference to GMT

+3

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Christian

Language

Malagasy, French

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

Prepare for a variety of weather. Temperatures in Andringitra are low in the southern winter and will be down to below freezing at night. Isalo on the other hand will be hot in the day and cool at night. Andringitra can be drizzly and wet, Isalo should be dry, while Ranomafana can get very wet. Light clothing which dries easily and protects arms and legs is recommended along with some warmer wear for Andringitra and evenings. Ranomafana will be humid so waterproof leggings may not be useful but a good lightweight long rain coat is essential. Culturally it is acceptable to wear shorts.

Footwear

Well broken in walking/hiking boots with good ankle support are recommended.

Luggage

18Kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend for you to travel with up to 3 pieces of luggage: A main piece of luggage that can go in the hold of your international flight. An empty trek bag that can be used while trekking, and a Day Bag/small Backpack for carrying your trekking essentials during the trekking days. Please see below for full descriptions of each bag. Main luggage: Also needs to be used as storage when on trek. Preferably should have a lock and be a maximum weight of 18kgs for the porters to carry. There will be no access to this bag during trekking days and nights. Trek bag: Use a strong, soft walled, robust, waterproof trek bag or rucksack that can easily be carried by the porters. Needs to hold a maximum of five nights essentials. This will be your main luggage bag during trekking nights. Small Rucksack/Day bag: During the course of a trekking day, you do not have access to the luggage that is being carried for you by the porters. In any mountain region the weather can change rapidly and you must be equipped for this eventuality. Your daysack should, therefore, be large enough to carry the following: waterproofs, fleece, long trekking trousers (if walking in shorts), warm hat and gloves, sun hat, sun cream, water bottle (at least 3litre), tissues and your packed lunch. Most people normally find that this adds up to about 3 to 5kg. Camera equipment can be heavy so think carefully when deciding what to take. Remember to carry spare batteries with you during the day. Something between 25 and 35 litres capacity is probably the most suitable. A shoulder bag is not a practical alternative.

Equipment

Main Luggage: You will never need to carry your own backpack (except from the hotel room to the bus) as we provide porters for the trekking sections. You may prefer to leave a bag behind at the hotel and only take with you on the trek what you will need for a few days (that is carried by porters) so it is useful to have a spare bag available to split your luggage. You will only be required to carry your day sack whilst trekking. Also if you pack your gear in heavy-duty plastic bags inside your trek bag, it will stay dry in case of rain. One of these inside your day bag is also strongly recommended. Sleeping Bag: As you do not carry it yourself, this may be down or synthetic, but it must be 3/4 season comfort rating (temperature 0°C to 10°C). A silk or fleece liner helps to keep your bag clean and adds an extra season. Sleeping Mat: An inflatable thermarest style mat is helpful in order to help you get a good night's rest, although a roll matt will be provided locally. Sleeping Aids: You may find earplugs and an eye mask useful at night. Trekking Poles: Trekking poles are recommended. Water Bottle or Platypus/Camelbak hydration system: Water along the trail must never be considered as drinkable until purified. Take at least two 2 litre personal water bottles or a system that allows for this much water, preferably insulated. A personal supply of water purification tablets/drops is essential. Powdered fruit juice can be used to disguise the taste. Energy snacks, including chocolate and sweets, are also recommended whilst on trek. Sunglasses: A good pair of sunglasses is essential for protection against UV rays and glare at high altitudes. Also bring sunblock, a hat, insect repellent and a good torch. You may also wish to bring binoculars and walking poles.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you

receive.

Local crew

Local Crew: Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly you should allow approx. £35 for gratuities for local staff.

International Departure Taxes

Ivato (Antananarivo) Airport: International airport departure tax is approximately 38Euros Domestic airport departure tax is approximately 20Euros There is an additional country departure tax of US\$15.00 per person. Flight tickets issued after 04 November 2016 will include the departure taxes as part of the ticket. If you have booked your flight ticket independently please check with your travel agent/airline if these taxes are included in your ticket. If any are not you will need to pay for the above taxes locally at the airport in cash.

Country Information

Madagascar Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£7.00

Dinner price

£12.00

Beer price

£2.00 - 4.00

Water price

£0.50

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Malagasy Ariary.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

We recommend taking most of your money in GBP, US Dollars or Euro cash. GBP can be changed at Tana airport and then after that Euro or US\$ will be the preferred cash for exchange outside the capital. Please note that US\$100 bills are not accepted and credit cards are rarely accepted.

Where To Exchange

Limited to Antananarivo, Antsirabe and Fianarantsoa. Your tour leader will advise on arrival.

ATM Availability

Antananarivo only, but ATMs cannot be relied upon.

Credit Card Acceptance

Very limited in Antananarivo and not to be relied upon.

Travellers Cheques

Take some travellers cheques in case of emergencies, though note that they are extremely difficult to exchange. Up-to-date information re: global exchange rates can be obtained at <https://www.currencyexpress.com/explore/>

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Flight, Minibus

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

The accommodation on this tour varies between standard hotels and basic camping in almost equal measure. We have therefore classified the accommodation on this tour as in the middle of these two categories - simple. The camp sites all have running water and basic toilet facilities (long drop); some have showers. Basic roll mats are provided but we would advise you bring a thermarest type mat too as the ground can be cold

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Madagascar: An entry visa is required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens and can be obtained on arrival. The visa is chargeable at 80.000AR (approximately 30Euros) and issued for 30 days. The visa fee is payable in Euros and we advise to take small denominations and a little extra as the Euro amount is calculated daily by the applicable rate of exchange. Please note GBP sterling is not accepted for the visa fee. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate. Travel via South Africa (including transits): From 1st June 2015 South Africa will enforce new immigration regulations effecting all children aged under 18 years that are travelling to, from or via the country. The new laws state that parents and/or guardian maybe requested by the airline and/or South Africa immigration officers to provide additional documentation for each child they are travelling with. Please refer to the FOC website (for UK passport holders) and/or your local South African High Commission or Embassy for full requirements. The following link, is a leaflet produced by the South African government explaining the requirements: <http://www.dha.gov.za/files/Brochures/Immigrationleaflet.pdf>

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Madagascar Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A plus Polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Following the advice given by the Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, we strongly recommend the wearing long sleeved shirts and the liberal application of insect repellent as a precautionary measure to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes. These precautions should be taken at all times as the mosquitoes are also active during daylight hours. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.
