

EXPLORE!



BEST SELLER

The Lost Continent
15 days

Madagascar - Trip code MD

The Lost Continent

There is no more unique landscape on earth in which to discover exotic wildlife than on the isolated island of Madagascar. We explore the rainforests, nature reserves and national parks in search of the many species of endangered lemur. We travel from the Malagasy capital Tana across volcanic lakes and sandstone rock formations to the golden shores of the Indian Ocean.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Andasibe Reserve** - Track the Indri lemur and other remarkable wildlife
- ★ **Antsirabe** - Walk along a stunning crater lake in Tritriva.
- ★ **Highland Scenery** - Rice paddies, villages and colourful markets.
- ★ **Ranomafana** - Walk in the rainforest and observe various species of lemurs, chameleons and amphibians.
- ★ **Isalo National Park** - Explore the 'Grand Canyon' of Madagascar and meet troops of Ring-tailed lemurs.

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

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 - Join tour Antananarivo

Arrive in Antananarivo. The city is cheerfully stacked on the sloping sides of the Highlands. This medieval capital is affectionately known as 'Tana' and enjoys a pleasant climate (1350m).



Accommodation: Hotel Au Bois Vert (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Drive to Andasibe Reserve, view wildlife

Today we will drive to Andasibe village otherwise known as Perinet. Although only eight square kilometres, Andasibe Reserve boasts nine species of Lemur, including the largest, the Indri indri, whose piercing voice can be heard throughout the forest. Colourful chameleons and many birds can also be seen as we spend the afternoon walking trails in this beautiful forested reserve. There will also be a nocturnal walk in search of wildlife including mouse and dwarf lemur, sleeping chameleons, frogs and insects.



Accommodation: Feon'ny Ala Bungalows (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Single room available

DAY 3 - Visit to National Park or Lemur Island, looking for Black and White Ruffed Lemur

This morning we have a chance to do some birdwatching before making our main wildlife walk in the Analamazoatra Reserve. We hope to find the Indri Indri again and to hear their haunting morning group communication calls. Other lemur species we might see include the lesser bamboo lemur, diademed sifaka, brown lemur, red-bellied lemur and sleeping eastern woolly lemur. This is also a good site for birding and spotting chameleons and sometimes snakes or tenrec. In the afternoon there will be optional visit to a private reserve with more opportunities to spot lemurs at close quarters, or else a visit to the village of Andasibe itself.



Accommodation: Feon'ny Ala Bungalows (or similar)



Standard Lodge



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Drive to Antsirabe, explore the colonial architecture and churches

Heading south we reach the spa town of Antsirabe, the coolest place in Madagascar. Its climate made it a favourite spot with European missionaries and their influence can still be seen in the colonial architecture and churches. Antsirabe is also the agricultural and administrative centre of Madagascar and is also regarded as the pousse-pousse capital.



Accommodation: Camelia Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Lake Tritiva; drive to Ambositira, Malagasy meal and local dancing

This morning we drive to the volcanic Lake of Tritiva. Local myths and taboos have grown up around this mysterious lake which seems to have many guises, changing colour from one day to the next. We have the opportunity to walk round the lake before driving to Ambositira in the afternoon. We'll visit some of the craft shops, which produce carvings of Malagasy life, furniture and detailed marquetry work. We shall stay at a local development guest house, and there may be the opportunity to enjoy a traditional

Malagasy meal and see a folk dancing display this evening. Although the accommodation we use on this night stop is modest and of lower standard than what is provided throughout the rest of the trip, by staying here we directly support an important base for the development of health projects, agriculture, water supply and the empowerment of women within the local community. Any school supplies you may like to donate such as notebooks and pencils would be very gratefully received and passed on to the local children. The accommodation is dormitory style, simple but clean, with shared facilities. Hot water is not available.



Accommodation: Voteta Bungalows (or similar)



Simple Community House



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 6 - Scenic drive to Ranomafana National Park

The drive to Ranomafana takes up most of the day, however the winding road passes varied landscapes of rugged ridges, huge boulders and rural villages surrounded by rice paddies. En route we will stop in Lalatsara for lunch. In 1987 in Ranomafana National Park a new species of lemur named the Golden Bamboo was found. There are many hidden waterfalls and the Namorona river flows through some impressive gorges, flanked on either side by tropical rainforest.



Accommodation: Centrest Sejour Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 7 - In Ranomafana National Park, searching for Lemurs and birdlife

This morning will enter the park for an early morning walk, but you may choose to do some optional birdwatching before this. Most lemur species are endangered, the last survivors of a once abundant family of primates, now confined to pockets of forest and bush throughout Madagascar. Deforestation has taken a heavy toll on these arboreal creatures - about 80 species remain. With luck we may see some of the species found in the park including Red-Bellied lemur, Grey Bamboo lemur, Milne-Edwards'sifaka and perhaps the Black and White Ruffed lemur and the extremely rare Golden Bamboo lemur. We may also spot the Malagasy boa constrictor, chameleons, the black parrot, cuckoo roller and many other birds. In the afternoon there will be an additional optional walk within the park with a chance to spot the species not already seen during the morning.



Accommodation: Centrest Sejour Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 8 - Drive to Isalo National Park (Ranohira)

Returning to the main road this morning, we continue south via the regional capital of Fianarantsoa, the academic centre of Madagascar. Leaving the highland plateau and descending through superb mountain scenery to the plains we pause at Ambalavao paper workshop before arriving at Anja Community Reserve. Here we have the chance to watch troupes of ring-tailed lemur among the granite boulders. Continuing south the pine trees thin out and the fertile soil of the highlands gives way to drier savannah,

cactus, termite mounds, and the dust of the midsouth. We finally reach our destination late in the afternoon. Ranohira, situated on the edge of the Isalo National Park.



Accommodation: Hotel Relais de la Reine (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 9 - Isalo National Park, admire Madagascar's Grand Canyon

One of the highlights of our trip is Madagascar's Grand Canyon in Isalo National Park. Dervla Murphy, in her book Muddling through Madagascar describes it thus - Landscapes that are literally incredible. You don't believe it. You think you're hallucinating. How can wind and water have done all this? - Natural erosion has produced fantastic canyons and bizarre outcrops of wind-blasted sandstone. Sparse dry deciduous forest, including species of dwarf-like baobab and succulents, is found in the park. We plan to walk to a natural oasis pool known as Piscine Naturelle and see tombs of the Bara people. This afternoon you have the opportunity to take an optional walk within the park to Namaza to see the Cascade des Nymphes.



Accommodation: Hotel Relais de la Reine (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 10 - Drive to Toliara, through the Spiny Desert, stopping at Mahafaly Tombs

This morning we continue our journey south. The temperature rises as we lose height and head for the coast, crossing the savannah plain, dotted with herds of Zebu cattle. The south of Madagascar is largely desert, and weird cactus-like plants unique to the island smother the land and make up the vast areas of so called 'spiny desert'. Close to Sakaraha is the Zombitse National Park. Here we will walk near the remarkable dry forest which is home to many birds, including black parrots, the Madagascar buzzard and the cuckoo roller. The very rare Apperts\Greenbull is also here. As we continue our drive, we'll pass by a number of fascinating Mahafaly Tombs before reaching the town of Toliara once an important port of call for Dutch and English ships plying the trade routes during the 16th and 17th centuries.



Accommodation: Victory Hotel (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Swimming pool available



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Morning boat journey to fishing village of Anakao, afternoon free

After breakfast this morning we transfer by boat from Toliara to the small fishing village of Anakao, located to the south, just past the Onilahy river estuary. The rich turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean beckon from our beach hideaway. Please note: due to limited space on the boat we kindly request that you take a smaller overnight bag to Anakao. Your main luggage will be stored in Toliara.



Accommodation: Hotel Safari Vezo (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 12 - In Anakao; optional snorkelling visit to Nosy Ve

Today has again been left free to enjoy Anakao. You may wish to spend your day here relaxing on the beach; alternatively there is the option to take a trip out to the island of Nosy Ve, located just off Anakao's western shore. The island is still considered a sacred site for the local Vezo people and with its reefs and colonies of Red-tailed tropicbirds, it is an ideal place to soak up the tropical atmosphere of this island paradise, and an opportunity to do some snorkelling.



Accommodation: Hotel Safari Vezo (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 13 - Transfer to Toliara and fly to Tana.

This morning we depart Anakao and return to Toliara for our flight back to Tana, where we will spend the night.



Accommodation: Hotel Au Bois Vert (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 14 - Visit Ambohimanga, oldest palace in country; visit to Lemur park

This morning we head to the oldest palace in Madagascar situated on Ambohimanga, a forested hill, north of Antananarivo. It was from this fortress that the Merina, a highland tribe, first established an effective administration and military command under the King Andrianampoinamerina. The fort includes the original king's hut and later European buildings. From here we have magnificent views over the fertile rice fields below. We will then continue on to the Lemur Park which is located approximately 25km outside Tana. Nine species of lemurs coming from different regions of Madagascar wander freely in this botanical garden covering an area of five hectares of small forest situated by the Katsoaka River. The park also contains many species of the flora of Madagascar. In the afternoon you may have a chance for some last minute sightseeing or shopping in Tana before our final night of the tour.



Accommodation: Hotel Au Bois Vert (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 15 - Tour ends Tana

This morning our tour ends in Tana after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 14
Lunch: 4
Dinner: 7



Transport

Flight
Minibus



Trip staff

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



Accommodation

1 nights simple community house
8 nights standard hotel
3 nights simple hotel
2 nights standard lodge

Trip information

Country information

Madagascar

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

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Andasibe - Nocturnal walk £5. Dawn Birdwatching £5. Extra Park or village walk £3. Private Reserve £5

Ranomafana - Bird walk approx £3-5 depending on numbers. Optional Forest walk £3

Anakao - Snorkelling £15, piroque to Nosy Ve £15

Toliara - Arboreteum £10, Spiney Forest Walk £15 (depending on numbers).

Clothing

Clothing should be lightweight, but a warm sweater or jacket is advisable as nights at altitude and under desert conditions can be very cold (>10°C), even in summer and especially in July to September. Rainwear is highly recommended on all tours for the occasional shower. Warmer layers will be required during the winter months. Don't forget your swimwear.

Footwear

Lightweight walking bootshoes and trainers or sandals.

Luggage

18Kg

Luggage: On tour

One kitbag/rucksack or old but sturdy suitcase (luggage travels on the roof rack during the day) and a daysac. You will also need a smaller overnight bag for Anakao.

Equipment

Take a strong torch for nocturnal wildlife walks, a water bottle, camera film (and spare batteries), binoculars and a beach towel and swimming costume. Rain proof pants are very handy for walks in the rainforest. Walking poles maybe useful in Ranomafana NP and Andasibe.

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 recognised 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. Accordingly, you should allow approx. £35 for tipping.

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.

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

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

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

Non refundable permits

Madagascar

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A plus Polio and diptheria. 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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
