An island of adventure! Discover rare lemurs, colourful tribes, stunning national parks, tropical beaches, bustling markets and ever-changing scenery in 12 breathtaking days.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

• Antananarivo - capital of Madagascar
• Andasibe National Park - See the largest lemurs, the Indri Indri
• Beautiful Antsirabe
• Colourful Ambositra - home of the wood carving industry
• Ranomafana National Park - Lemurs, chameleons, birds and reptiles
• Wine tasting at Ambalavao
• Isalo National Park - the Natural Swimming Pool
• Diving, snorkelling, birdwatching or relaxing at Ifaty Beach
• Andsibe Village and tribal people

What's Included

• 11 breakfasts
• 11 days 3-4 star accommodation. Please Note: Accommodation named, may be subject to change but will be of a similar standard

What's Not Included

• International flights and visas
• Internal flight between Tulear to Tana (Antananarivo)
• Tipping - an entirely personal gesture
• Drinks and items of a personal nature

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Antananarivo
Upon arrival into Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure.

Day 2: Andasibe
Antananarivo – Andasibe. In the morning we will start our journey with a drive to Andasibe through the green and luxuriant vegetation of eastern Madagascar. This brings us to a very humid part of the country with many primary forests and lakes. Along the way we will see Merina villages spread in the rocky mountains. We arrive at Andasibe in the afternoon and check-in to the hotel. In the evening we will set off from the hotel at approximately 19h00 on a night walk to observe night active lemurs and other nocturnal animals. We return to the hotel where we overnight.

Day 3: Natural Reserve of Andasibe
We start our morning with a visit to the Special Reserve of Andasibe to see the Indri, the largest lemurs on the island. This 810 ha reserve is unique with its endemic

Accommodation: Hotel Carlton, Palissandre Hotel and Spa or similar, with en-suite bathrooms
Overnight - Andasibe
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fauna and flora and contains a wide variety of orchids, canopy, and endemic animals like chameleons, tenrecs, and many birds. In the afternoon, we visit the Vakona lemur island, a private reserve offering up close photo opportunities with the many habituated lemurs who find refuge there. We overnight at the same hotel.

Accommodation: Andasibe Hotel, Vakona Forest Hotel or similar, with en-suite bathrooms & veranda
Overnight - Andasibe (B)

Day 4 : Lilly Waterfall & Antsirabe

Andasibe - Antsirabe. We have an early start and drive back to Tana today, then head west across the highlands to Ampefy, a fertile volcanic area. The spectacular eroded hills called 'lavaka' remind us of the Far East with its rice fields and green landscape with vegetables and fruit trees.

After a quick lunch stop in a forested area, we arrive in Ampefy in the afternoon and visit the thundering Lilly Waterfall. We continue our journey through small villages and arrive in Antsirabe around 18h00. 'The place of salt' is an elegant city and known as the centre of the beer industry - we can smell the Star Brewery as we enter the town! Founded by Norwegians in 1856, it is the only place which really feels and looks like a European city. It has a temperate climate and therefore fruit and vegetables which grow in colder climates, are found in Antsirabe.

Distance: 309 km
Accommodation: Royal Palace Hotel, Plumeria Hotel or similar, with en-suite bathrooms
Overnight - Antsirabe (B)

Day 5 : Ranomafana National Park

Antsirabe - Ranomafana National Park. After breakfast we drive to Ambositra, the centre of Madagascar's wood carving industry. The highlands are characterized by its architecture: The houses are made with ornately carved wooden balconies and shutters with bright colours. Further on we pass the 'le col de tapia', a type of tree resistant to bush fires. The landscape is still dominated by rice fields, pine forests, eucalyptus trees and rocky mountains. We turn off from the main road to reach our destination for the day: Ranomafana National Park.

Distance: 250 km
Accommodation: Setam Lodge, Hotel Thermal or similar, with en-suite bathrooms
Overnight - Ranomafana National Park (B)

Day 6 : Ranomafana National Park

The approximately 40,000 ha of Parc National de Ranomafana with its rain forest covered hills and abundant wildlife, has long been considered one of Madagascar's highlights, and is one of the country's national parks most heavily visited. Its entrance lies about 7 km from Ranomafana village and altitudes in the Park Range from 800 m to 1200 m. In addition to its densely forested hills, Ranomafana's terrain is characterised by numerous small streams which plummet down to the beautiful Namorona River. Although much of the region has been logged, the easternmost part of the park retains relatively large areas of primary forest. You will go for long walks in the National Park spotting some of the lemurs, chameleons and other animals.

Accommodation: Setam Lodge, Hotel Thermal or similar, with en-suite bathrooms
Overnight - Ranomafana National Park (B)

Day 7 : Wine Tasting & Ihosy

Ranomafana - Fianarantsoa – Isalo. Returning on the road we came on, we leave Ranomafana and visit a local wine farm for wine tasting near Fianarantsoa 'the city where one learns good things'. Note that visits to the wine farms may not be possible over weekends. The city is the gate to the South, the capital of the Betsileo tribes and the centre of the catholic religion. Most of the best schools in the country are also found here. Fianarantsoa is the centre of wine industry - the climate is said not to be ideal for grape vines, but it is a tradition left by the priests and monks who lived in the area of Fianarantsoa.

We then head southwards to Ambalavao and visit the 'Anteimoro Paper Factory' which is a vestige of the Arabian civilisation on the island. We also visit Anja Park – a community run park where you can see some families of ring-tailed lemurs, also known as ‘Lemur Catta’.

We continue to Ihosy the capital of the Buna tribes, who are shepherds of Zebu, and further on pass through the mountain chain of Andringitra, which serves as a transition between the dry south and green highlands with its famous '3 hillocks' and its huge 'archbishop’s cape'. Along the way we will see from afar a spectacular huge granite dome with twin rock towers called ‘the gate of the south’, which in fact marks the end of the highland and the beginning of the south. The ‘Bishop’s hat’ is another noticeable, imposing formation and a sacred location for the local people - a place where their ancestors chose a collective suicide rather than to give in to the Merina tribes. We then pass through the huge ‘Plateaux de Horombe’ with its very deep red soil, which reminds us of ‘the no man’s land’ and we arrive in Isalo.

Distance: 355 km
Accommodation: Isalo Rock Lodge, Jardin du Roy or similar, with en-suite bathroom and air-conditioning

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Overnight - Isalo (B)

Day 8: Isalo National Park

Today, we will visit and hike in the Isalo National Park. The park covers an area of 81,540 ha, comprising of the entire stretch of the Isalo massif. This huge mountain is very spectacular with its eroded sandstone elevations. After a 10 minute drive from Ranohira village, we park our car and walk about ½ hour to reach the Natural Swimming Pool. Along the way we will see vegetation like Usapa bojeri, Pachypodium rosulatum or ‘elephant’s foot’ and Aloe isaloensis, a native species of aloe endemic to Isalo.

The eroded mountains also served as a place where the Bara kept their dead before they could bury them in their actual tombs. We start our climb and reach the massif after walking about 20 minutes, where we will have a spectacular view of the huge sandstone mountains with its beautiful colours and its strange and battered formations creating many different images like ‘the tortoise’, ‘the masks’ and ‘the crocodiles’. We see small streams of water, and rivers which are marked by lines of brilliant green, generally made up of numerous Pandanus pulcher and the delicate, slim-stemmed, feathery leaved palm Chrysalidocarpus isaloensis. Along the way, there may be sifakas, brown lemurs and ring-tailed lemurs, as well as fifty-five species of birds, lizards and snakes. We finally reach the swimming pool, with its crystal clear water - a great reward after a long and very hot walk.

Accommodation: Isalo Rock Lodge or Jardin du Roy, or similar, with en-suite bathroom & air-conditioning

Overnight - Isalo (B)

Day 9: Ifaty

Isalo - Ifaty. After breakfast, we continue to Tulear, the terminal of the National Road N° 7. This part of our journey brings us to new scenery among the dry forests of the west and the spiny desert of the south. On the way, we admire the different ‘Mahafaly tombs’ and the ‘Antandroy tombs’. After a short visit of Tulear we drive to Ifaty, which lies about 27 km from Tulear. Due to the bad condition of the road, it will take us about 2½ hours to reach Ifaty, the driest part of the country. Situated in the Deep South, the landscape is dominated by the cactus-like, spiny forest of different euphorbiaceae and didieraceae. We will cross the dry and sandy soil where the local people battle to find drinking water.

Mangrove trees line the coast alternated by Vezo communities which earn their living from fishing. We will see many small pirogues with men who go out fishing twice a day, while children and women wait on the coast to collect the fish before taking them to Tulear for sale.

Distance:265 km

Accommodation: Le Paradisier, Les Dunes D’Ifaty or similar, with en-suite bathrooms

Overnight - Ifaty (B)

Day 10: Free day in Ifaty

Ifaty lies on the beach. It is therefore an ideal place for diving and snorkelling and a popular place for birdwatchers. Here you can also experience the Vezo fisherman’s life. Many excursions are possible on this leisure day. Visit the Reniala Forest where you can see two kinds of baobabs, spiny bush, reptiles like ‘boa madagascariensis’, geckos and the ‘chameleon parsoni’, which is one of the largest chameleons in the world. You can also take a boat trip to see whales. From July to mid-September, whales come to the cool seas of Madagascar to give birth to their young. It is a spectacular experience, and it is possible to see the whales very near to the boat. Situated in the largest lagoon of the country, Ifaty is also protected by a large coral reef, which makes it an ideal place for diving and snorkelling. In the afternoon we can walk to the village of Mangily to visit a local school and experience the Vezo fishermen’s way of life, especially as they return from fishing.

Accommodation: Le Paradisier, Les Dunes D’Ifaty or similar, with en-suite bathrooms

Overnight - Ifaty (B)

Day 11: Fly to Tana

Ifaty - Antananarivo. Early in the morning around 06h00, transfer to the airport for your flight back to Tana (Please note the price does not include cost of internal flight Tulear - Antananarivo approx Euro 299. This should be booked in conjunction with international flight or we can book it for you upon request).

After check-in at the hotel, you have the afternoon free to explore and to do some sightseeing. The capital of Madagascar is also called the ‘City of Thousands’ and it is where the first King started to unify the different kingdoms of the island. Tana was built in three stages: The high city, the first area occupied during the regal period where the old queen’s palace is situated; the mid-city, where all the chic boutiques of the capital are found; and then the low city, which is the commercial area of the town. Walk from the high city to see the Rova, the queen’s palace, and the house of the first minister during these days, which is now a museum. All of these were built by Frenchman Jean Laborde during the royal period. The mid-city, or the administration area, ends at the Rainiharo tombs and the lower town is

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TRIP NOTES

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situated in the main avenue called ‘L’avenue de l’indépendence’ dominated by the railway station.

Distance: 20 km

Accommodation: Hotel Carlton, Palissandre Hotel & Spa or similar, with en-suite bathrooms. **Overnight - Antananarivo (B)**

**Day 12: Antananarivo**

Today is the end of our tour and you will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight. (B)

**Please Note**

This tour is operated in conjunction with our trusted partner and you will join travellers from different operators, not solely On The Go.

This tour requires a minimum of 4 passengers to run but it can also be operated for 2-3 passengers for a supplement. Please note that for 2-3 passengers a supplement is payable should you require a specialist English speaking guide to accompany you throughout the tour (excluding days 9 & 10). Malagasy drivers speak basic English & have general knowledge of history, culture and the fauna & flora in Madagascar. An English speaking guide is included for group of 4 passengers or more.

This tour is run on scheduled dates throughout the year, but can also be tailor-made to meet your dates, time period and group size. Please contact us if you would like to book this as a private tour.

**Arrival**

When arriving in Antananarivo in the morning of day 1 of the tour, you will be picked up from the airport and embark on your tour. Should you arrive prior to day 1, pre-tour accommodation can be arranged and you will be picked up from your hotel on the morning of day 1 (Pick up time will be confirmed on arrival).

**Accommodation & Transportation**

Accommodation will be in mid-range hotels. Please note that Madagascar is a country which is in its infancy when it comes to tourism. Accommodation is limited so all the above mentioned accommodation are subject to availability and we reserve the right to change these using similar accommodation of the same standards. The hotels used are simple & clean and of mid-range standard, with bathrooms en-suite. Transportation is in a minibus.

**Flights**

**Flights**

The internal flight from Tulear to Antananarivo on day 7 is not included in the price of this tour. The cost is approximately €299 and this flight should be booked in conjunction with your international flights.

There are special airfares for flights from Johannesburg to Antananarivo 7 days of the week, and regular flights from Paris to Antananarivo with Air France and Air Madagascar. We can assist you with booking your flights upon request.

**Passports & Visas**

Please ensure that you have at least two blank pages in your passport, plus an additional blank page for each visa/African country you are visiting. If travelling on one of our longer overland safaris we recommend that you have at least 12 blank pages in your passport.

Please also note that your passport must be valid for a minimum of six months from the end date of your trip.

Any visa information provided in this document is for general guidance purposes only, visa requirements and fees are subject to change. It is essential that you check current entry requirements with each relevant embassy/consulate prior to departure. Visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not of On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months after return date.

Please be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Africa and that you have enough blank pages in your passport for all of the visas you require.

It is essential that you check the visa requirements of every country you will be visiting with the local embassy, consulate or a reputable visa handling company for the most up to date visa information before you travel.

**Visa Information**

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**Allergies/Likes/Dislikes**

Whilst all will done to accommodate everyone, sometimes the choice available is limited as your cook may be making the best of very limited availability, so some flexibility may be required when encountering something you’re not particularly fond of or have chosen not to eat as a lifestyle choice.

Should you possess allergies which will result in an medical emergency or a life threatening situation then please ensure you speak to your cook on arrival so you can discuss the options available whilst en-route. This will ensure also that they are fully aware of what you can or cannot eat and make adjustments.

**Madagascar Country Guide**

Please provide more information about Madagascar Country Guide.