

# EXPLORE!

## TRIP NOTES



### Madagascar Wilderness Trek (MF 2017)



TRIPDURATION  
**15**  
DAYS



**Tour Style:** Classic

**Accommodation Grade:** Simple

**Tour Type:** Small Groups

**Trek Grade:** Moderate

**Trip Code:** MF

#### Trip Highlights - Madagascar Wilderness Trek

- ✓ Trek in the rainforest - A unique ecosystem and home to lemurs, chameleons, amphibians and countless species of birds.
- ✓ Off the beaten track - Hike in national parks and other remote areas
- ✓ Villages and people - Interact with the friendly and hospitable local people.

#### Trip Essentials

**Accommodation:** 8 nights Standard Hotel  
6 nights Simple  
Camping

**Included Meals:** 14 breakfasts, 8  
lunches, 8 dinners

**Start Point:** Join trip: Antananarivo

**End Point:** Trip ends: Antananarivo

**Transport:** Flight, Minibus

**Countries:** Madagascar

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## Madagascar Wilderness Trek

Verdant rainforests and dramatic landscapes are the setting for this hiking adventure in Madagascar. Supported by local porters we get off the beaten track, trekking through lush tropical vegetation, granite hills, highland meadows, and surreal sandstone landscapes. We also ascend Madagascar's highest climbable peak, Pico Imarivolanitra (2658m). En route we hope to see 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.

### Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

### Accommodation Grade: Simple

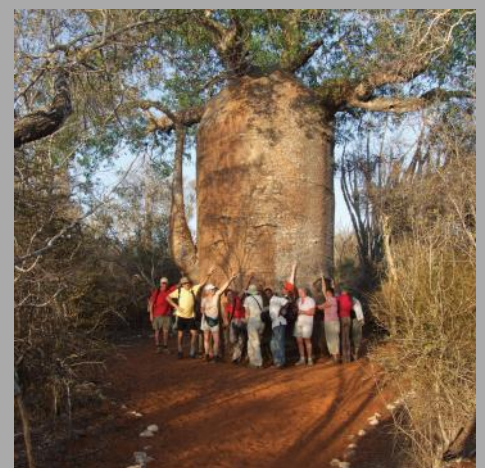
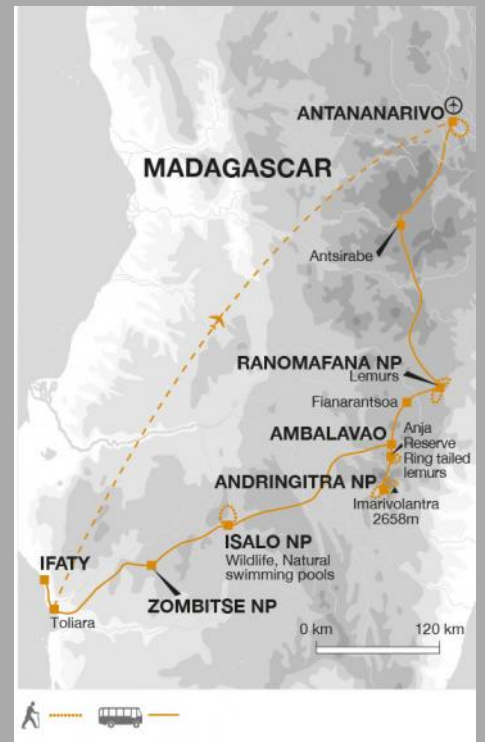
No-frills accommodation which includes berths on sleeper trains, rooms in village houses, boat cabins, campsites, huts and simple family-run lodges, guesthouses and hotels. Sleeping arrangements are simple and amenities are adequate, sometimes with en suite facilities and occasionally communal.

### Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

### Trek 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.



## Your trip itinerary

### Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

### Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

### 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.


Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** 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.


Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** 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.


Overnight: **Simple Camping**  
**Your own tent available**

 **Included Meals:** 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** 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.


Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** 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.


Overnight: **Simple Camping**  
**Your own tent available**

 **Included Meals:** 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.


Overnight: **Simple Camping**  
**Your own tent available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 8 **Walk to the summit of Imarivolanitra (2658 m)**

Today we walk up between a series of granite boulders to the summit of Imarivolanitra, 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.


Overnight: **Simple Camping**  
**Your own tent available**

 **Included Meals:** 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 Namaza campsite. This camp is on the edge of the Isalo sandstone massif where the dry forest is home to sifaka, ring-tailed lemur and brown lemur. It is a basic campsite with simple washing facilities. From the campsite 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.


Overnight: **Simple Camping**  
**Your own tent available**

 **Included Meals:** 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 our next campsite. The campsite has basic facilities. Today's walk covers 8 kilometres over approximately four hours. We walk along uneven sandstone paths.

Overnight: **Simple Camping**  
**Your own tent available**

 **Included Meals:** 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

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

This morning we take a gentle walk to Ambohitrabiby Hill on the outskirts of Antananarivo through local villages and rice paddies. We also learn about local silk weaving before returning to Antananarivo in the afternoon. Our walk covers 6 kilometres over approximately three hours. We walk along simple footpaths.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 15 Tour ends Antananarivo

Our tour ends in Antananarivo, after breakfast.

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Accommodation and Meals

### Accommodation Notes

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.

### Food & Drink

Included meals: 14 breakfasts, 8 lunches, 8 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

## Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### Food

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.

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## Madagascar

**Lunch £:** 7.00

**Dinner £:** 12.00

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## Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

## Madagascar

**Bottle of Beer £:** 2.00 - 4.00

**Water £:** 0.50

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## International Departure Taxes

Ivato (Antananarivo) Airport:

International departure tax is approximately 38Euros

Domestic departure tax is approximately 20Euros

Flight tickets issued after 04 November 2016 will include the departure tax as part of the ticket. If you have booked your flight ticket independently please check with your travel agent/airline if this tax is included in your ticket.

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## Tipping - Tour Leader

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

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## Tipping - 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.

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## Foreign Exchange

### Madagascar

**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/>

**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.

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## Joining your Trip

### 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.

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### 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 on our website at [www.explore.co.uk](http://www.explore.co.uk), in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

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### 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.

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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 please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

## 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.

## Important Information

### Travel 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.

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The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE  
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers [www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore](http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore) who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

### Travel Aware

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 follow the link at [www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety](http://www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety)

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting [cr@explore.co.uk](mailto:cr@explore.co.uk) or 01252 379438.

### 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.

### 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. 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](http://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.

## Vaccinations & Protection

### Madagascar

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.

## Preparing for your Trip

### DAILY DISTANCES

|        |      |      |
|--------|------|------|
| Day 3  | 10km | 6hrs |
| Day 4  | 12km | 5hrs |
| Day 5  |      |      |
| Day 6  | 5km  | 2hrs |
| Day 7  | 12km | 4hrs |
| Day 8  | 15km | 7hrs |
| Day 9  | 5km  | 2hrs |
| Day 10 | 8km  | 4hrs |
| Day 11 | 4km  | 2hrs |
| Day 12 | 2km  | 2hrs |
| Day 13 |      |      |
| Day 14 | 6km  | 3hrs |

Optional Walks

### Trekking Details

Walks on 9 days for between 2 to 7 hours. Our maximum altitude is 2685m. We have graded this tour as moderate.

### Climate

#### Madagascar

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.

### 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.

### 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.

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## Footwear

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

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## 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.

Luggage allowance on trip: 18Kg

## General Information

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### Country details

#### Madagascar

**Population:** 21,926,221

**Size of Country:** 587,041 sq km

**Major Language:** Malagasy, French

**Religion:** Christian

**Time Difference to GMT:** +3

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### Electric Supply & Plugs

#### Madagascar

2 Pin Round

## Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.

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- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

### Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

### Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group ([www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

## Booking Your Holiday

### Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

### Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

### 100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

### Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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