
17 Days Comprehensive **Madagascar**

October 2 - 18, 2027

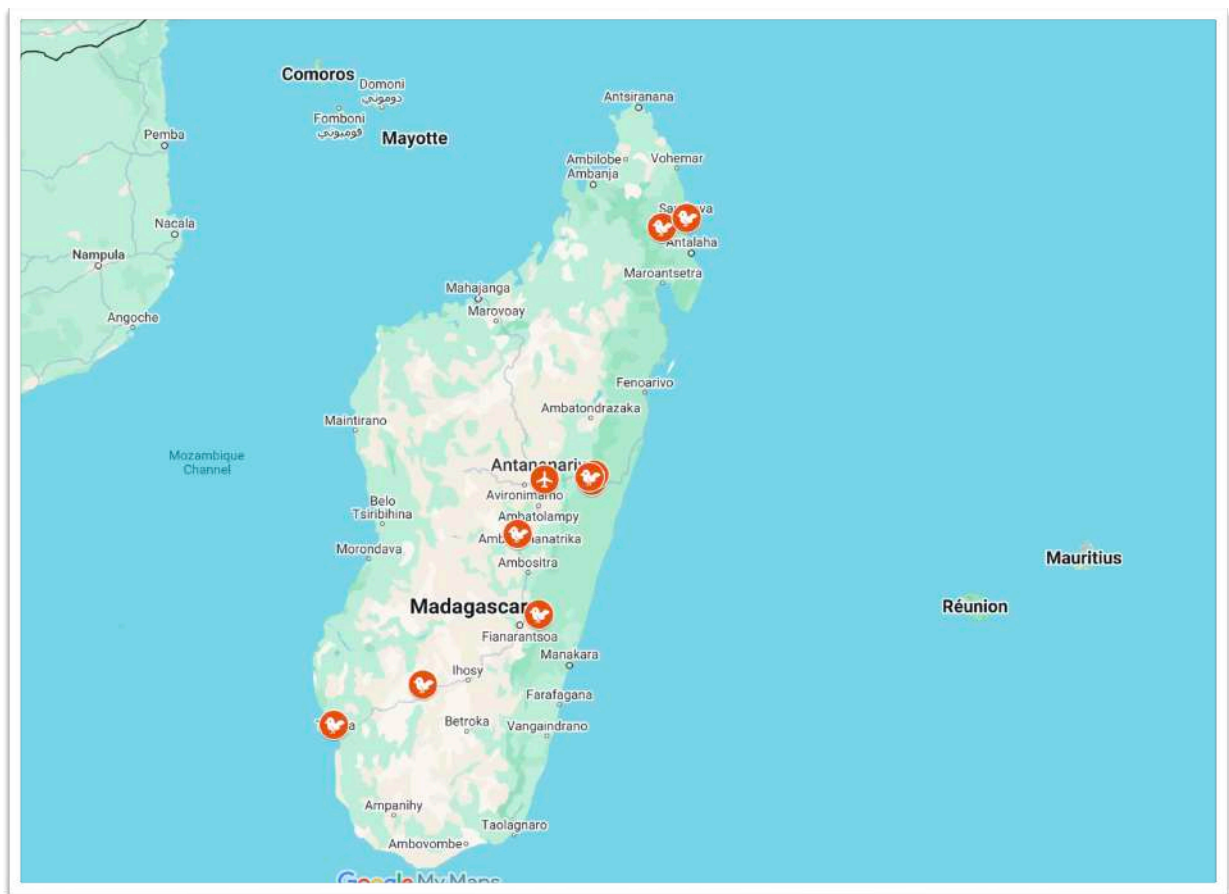


Birds and Wildlife of Madagascar

East + South West & North West

Madagascar Biodiversity Tour Itinerary

Madagascar is home to an extraordinary array of endemic wildlife, making it a premier destination for biodiversity exploration. Nearly 90% of its flora and fauna are found nowhere else on Earth. Birdwatchers can expect to see five endemic bird families, including vangas, ground rollers, and mesites. The island's unique landscapes include lush rainforests, spiny forests, montane cloud forests, and coastal wetlands, each supporting distinctive species. Lemurs, chameleons, and rare amphibians add to the spectacle. This tour covers key biodiversity hotspots, including Andasibe-Mantadia National Park, Ranomafana National Park, and Ifaty's spiny forest, offering unparalleled opportunities to observe Madagascar's endemic birds, mammals, and reptiles.



Day 1: Arrival in Antananarivo – Transfer to Andasibe

Travel: 150 km | 4-hour drive

Overnight: Feon'ny Ala Hotel



Antananarivo, the capital of Madagascar, is a bustling city rich in history and culture. From here, we drive east to Andasibe, a region known for its lush rainforests and diverse wildlife. The journey offers glimpses of rural Madagascar, with rice paddies and small villages along the way. Andasibe-Mantadia National Park is renowned for its dense forests that provide sanctuary to the Indri, Madagascar's largest lemur, and an impressive array of endemic birds. Upon arrival, we will settle into our lodge and prepare for the next day's exploration.

Day: Andasibe-Mantadia National Park & Totorofotsy Wetland

Key Birds: Pitta-like Ground Roller, Madagascar Crested Ibis, Nuthatch Vanga, Cuckoo-Roller

Nocturnal Wildlife: Mouse Lemurs, Hairy-eared Dwarf Lemur, Chameleons. Travel: Short drives between sites. Overnight: Feon'ny Ala Hotel

Madagascar

Andasibe-Mantadia National Park is a pristine rainforest ecosystem home to a high concentration of Madagascar's endemic species. Birdwatchers can expect to see sought-after species such as the Pitta-like Ground Roller and the Madagascar Crested Ibis. The towering trees echo with the haunting calls of Indris, the park's iconic lemurs. A visit to Totorofotsy Wetland provides an excellent opportunity to spot the rare Grey emultail and Madagascar Snipe. Night walks reveal a different world, with sightings of chameleons, frogs, and nocturnal lemurs.

Day 4: Andasibe-Mantadia National Park – Return to Antananarivo

Key Species: Indri, Diademed Sifaka

Travel: 150 km | 4-hour drive. Overnight: Petite Flower Hotel

A final morning in Andasibe allows for one last chance to see the remarkable Indri, whose eerie wailing calls define this region. The Diademed Sifaka, an elegant golden-furred lemur, can also be spotted leaping between trees. After a rewarding morning, we drive back to Antananarivo, where the afternoon is spent at leisure or exploring Lac Alarobia, a sanctuary for waterbirds like Meller's Duck and Malagasy Pond Heron.

Day 5: Flight to Tulear – Drive to Ifaty

Key Birds: Madagascar Plover, Subdesert Mesite, Long-Tailed Ground Roller

Nocturnal Wildlife: Peter's Sportive Lemur, Totoroka Scops Owl

Travel: Flight + 27 km | 1-hour drive. Overnight: Nautilus Hotel.



A morning flight takes us to Tulear in southwestern Madagascar, followed by a short drive to Ifaty is known for its spiny forest habitat. This unique ecosystem, dominated by baobabs and euphorbias, shelters highly localized bird species, including the Long-tailed Ground Roller

and Subdesert Mesite. The afternoon is dedicated to birdwatching in this fascinating landscape. As dusk falls, a guided night walk offers the chance to see nocturnal lemurs and owls.



Day 6: Ifaty – Birding in the Spiny Forest

Key Birds: Lafresnaye's Vanga, Archbold's Newtonia, Running Coua

Reptiles: Warty Chameleon, Lesser Hedgehog Tenrec

Overnight: Nautilus Hotel

The morning is spent exploring the spiny forest of Ifaty, a botanically rich yet harsh environment where plants have adapted to arid conditions. Here, we will search for rare endemics such as the Lafresnaye's Vanga and the elusive Running Coua. The afternoon allows for relaxation or an optional visit to nearby wetlands where waders, including Madagascar Plover, can be seen.

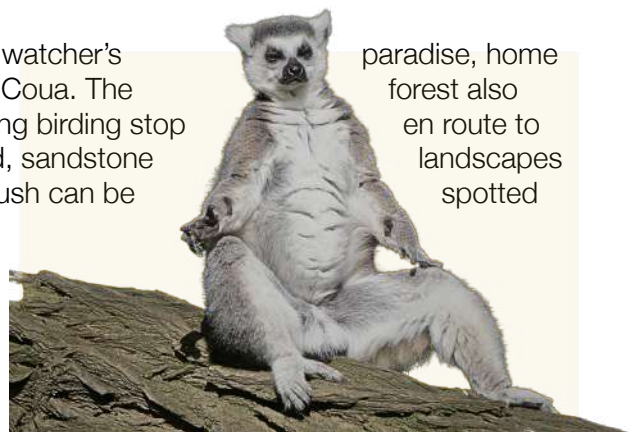
Day 7: Drive to Isalo via Zombitse Forest

Key Birds: Giant Coua, Appert's Tetraka, White-browed Owl

Key Mammals: Ring-tailed Lemur

Travel: 270 km | 5-hour drive. Overnight: Isalo Ranch

Zombitse Forest, a transitional dry forest, is a birdwatcher's to the rare Appert's Tetraka and the vibrant Giant Coua. The shelters White-browed Owls, making for an exciting birding stop Isalo. The afternoon is spent exploring the rugged, sandstone of Isalo National Park, where Benson's Rock Thrush can be among towering canyons.



paradise, home forest also en route to landscapes spotted

Day 8-10: Ranomafana National Park & Sahamalaotra Forest

Key Birds: Scaly Ground Roller, Pollen's Vanga, Yellow-bellied Sunbird-Asity, Red Owl

Key Mammals: Golden Bamboo Lemur, Milne-Edwards Sifaka

Travel: 350 km | 7-hour drive. Overnight: Centr'Est Hotel

Ranomafana National Park is one of Madagascar's premier biodiversity hotspots. The rainforest is alive with the sounds of rare birds and primates, including the Golden Bamboo Lemur. The forest's misty trails provide a habitat for the Scaly Ground Roller and other elusive species. Night walks reveal an impressive variety of frogs, leaf-tailed geckos, and nocturnal lemurs.

Day 11: Ranomafana to Antsirabe via Ambositra

Travel: 250 km | 6-hour drive

Overnight: Chambre du Voyageur Hotel

The drive to Antsirabe takes us through highland landscapes, with a stop in Ambositra, famous for its Zafimaniry woodcarvings. Here, we experience a cultural immersion with a traditional Malagasy lunch accompanied by folk music and dance. The journey continues to Antsirabe is a colonial-era town known for its thermal springs and vibrant local markets.

Day 12: Antsirabe to Antananarivo – Tsarasaotra Wetland

Travel: 170 km | 4-hour drive

Overnight: Petite Flower Hotel

After breakfast, we begin our journey back to Antananarivo, traveling through the high plateau's rolling landscapes. The route offers opportunities to observe traditional Malagasy villages and farmlands. Upon arrival in the capital, we visit Tsarasaotra Wetland, a haven for waterbirds. This private reserve is home to Meller's Duck, Malagasy Pond Heron, and various herons and egrets. The afternoon provides time to explore the city or relax at the hotel before an optional evening birding session in the wetland.

Day 13-16: Marojejy National Park Extension

Travel: Flight + 5-hour hike

Overnight: National Park Cabins

A morning flight to Sambava brings us to the northeastern rainforest of Marojejy National Park, one of Madagascar's most untouched wilderness areas. The trek to the park's first camp immerses us in a dense montane forest filled with Helmet Vangas and Short-legged Ground Rollers. Over the next days, we ascend deeper into the park, encountering rare species such as the Silky Sifaka and various amphibians. The nights are spent in simple yet comfortable park cabins, allowing for an immersive rainforest experience. The return journey follows the same route, with a final night in Sambava before flying back to Antananarivo.



Day 17: Flight to Antananarivo – Departure

Optional Birding: Tsarasaotra Wetland

A final morning in Madagascar allows for optional birding at Tsarasaotra Wetland, offering a last chance to spot any missed species. The day is otherwise leisurely, with an opportunity to explore Antananarivo's markets and historical sites. In the evening, we transfer to the airport for our international flights, marking the end of an unforgettable biodiversity tour.

Tour Ends

Tour Cost: TBA

Single Room Supplement: TBA

If you are joining alone, we will try to find a suitable roommate. However, if we are unable to do so, a single-room supplement will apply

Some of the accommodations we will be staying in during the tour may be modest, with basic facilities, but they are comfortable and ideally situated for birding and wildlife activities.

Included in the Tour Cost:

All accommodations as per the itinerary, all meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner), guide fees, ground transportation, entrance fees, and land permits.

Not Included in the Tour Cost:

3 domestic flights 1. Antananarivo (TNR) → Tulear (TLE) 2. Antananarivo (TNR) → Sambava (SVB) 3. Sambava (SVB) → Antananarivo (TNR), international flight tickets, visa fees, travel insurance, additional food and drinks, and tips for guides and staff.

**Special Note:**

Madagascar is one of the world's biodiversity hotspots, a destination that every nature enthusiast should visit at least once in their lifetime. However, explorers to this unique land must be prepared to face certain challenges, including:

- Potential flight cancellations or delays.
 - Health risks such as malaria (ensure you take proper medication and precautions).
 - Logistical issues due to the remote nature of the region.
 - Unpredictable weather, as rain can occur at any time.
 - Poor road conditions, making ground travel slow.
- As a result, last-minute changes to travel plans should be expected. We recommend maintaining flexibility and a spirit of adventure to fully enjoy this extraordinary experience.

Essential Packing List for Madagascar Expedition (September – North & South including Marojejy)

Clothing

- Lightweight, moisture-wicking shirts (long & short sleeve)
- Long, breathable trousers (for trekking and insect protection)
- Waterproof jacket or poncho (essential for Marojejy's rainforest)
- Fleece or lightweight sweater (cooler nights in highlands)
- Comfortable trekking boots (well broken-in)
- Sandals or camp shoes (for evenings/rest days)
- Hat or cap (sun protection)
- Buff or bandana (dust, sun, or insect cover)

Gear & Accessories

- Daypack with rain cover
- Headlamp/torch with extra batteries
- Dry bags or ziplocks (to protect electronics and clothes)
- Sunglasses (UV protection)
- Binoculars (essential for birding)
- Camera with telephoto lens (for wildlife/landscapes)
- Power bank/solar charger
- Universal travel adapter
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Health & Personal Care

- Personal medication & basic first aid kit
- Insect repellent (with DEET or Picaridin)
- Sunscreen (high SPF)
- Lip balm with SPF
- Antiseptic wipes/hand sanitiser
- Quick-dry towel
- Toiletries (biodegradable where possible)
- Malaria prophylaxis (consult your doctor)