

# Malagasy Mosaic



Days: 11  
Price: 820 EUR  
International flight not included  
Comfort: ★★★★★  
Difficult: ★★★☆☆  
Fauna & Flora Must see Hiking  
Ethnic minority Travel with children

In **Madagascar**, the **rain season** is a time when magnificent vegetation animates a life resplendent and full of force.

**Nature**, of extreme beauty, is illuminated by the clear, beautiful and gentle lights.

This route takes place between the **Highlands** and the **Mozambique Channel**. The diversity of landscape and vibrant life present everywhere, makes it incomparably attractive for who wants to live Madagascar fully and differently.

In this season, the lights are beautiful, the rice fields are as many mosaics declining shades of greens to infinity.

In the fields, people work hard and cultivate during this propitious period, which will allow them to make a living for the rest of the year.

Beyond the Highlands, the **plateau of Horombe**, covered with green and undulating pasture, allows **Bàrà pastoralists** to raise their zebu herds.

Then, the **Mozambique Channel**, protected by a coral reef, offers a haven of peace and multiple discoveries for passionate travelers.

## Day 1. Flight from Europe to Antananarivo



### Paris Roissy CDG - Antananarivo

- Flight to **Antananarivo**, dinner on board. Program elaborated based on **Air France** international flights (could be updated by the company).
- A member of the Détours Madagascar team welcomes you upon arrival at the Ivato Antananarivo airport in the evening. Transfer to your hotel for the night.

Paris Roissy CDG  
✈ 8500km - ⌚ 10h  
Antananarivo

🏠 Accommodation

Green Palace guest house | Ivato

## Day 2. Discovering the Central Highlands, Antsirabe the Thermal City



### Antananarivo - Ambatolampy

- We take the road towards the city of **Ambatolampy**, located South of **Antananarivo** on the Road National 7. Crossing typical landscape of the central Highlands, we drive along a sinuous road lined with a mosaic of crops and terrace rice fields.

### Ambatolampy - Antsirabe

- We meet with a dynamic rural world, evolving all around us as we drive through. Coming closer to Antsirabe, various fresh products from the fields are displayed along the road. We reach **Antsirabe, the thermal city**, nestled in the middle of the central Highlands.
- Antsirabe** is a pretty thermal city surrounded by volcanic mountains. It is the third biggest city in Madagascar. With its fresh air and cool climate all year round, Antsirabe is ideal to spend a weekend or some family vacation, especially for people living in Antananarivo.

The best way to stroll around the city is by taking the « **pousse-pousse** » (rickshaw, non included), to discover its streets in the most authentic way.

Antananarivo  
🚗 77km - ⌚ 1h 50m  
Ambatolampy  
🚗 96km - ⌚ 1h 30m  
Antsirabe

We take a tour around the city to visit the local craftsmen, famous for making miniatures of bicycles and cars with recycled material, and working with zebu horn.

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☕ Breakfast	Green Palace guest house   Ivato
🏠 Accommodation	Ecolodge Les chambres du voyageur   Antsirabe

## Day 3. Hiking around ricefields and villages in the valley of Betafo



Antsirabe 📍  
🚗 25km - ⌚ 30m  
Betafo 📍  
10km - ⌚ 4h  
Betafo 📍  
🚗 25km - ⌚ 30m  
Antsirabe 📍

### Antsirabe - Betafo

- In the morning, we leave Antsirabe to head West. We follow during a short time the large **valley of the Vakinankaratra**, flowing between ancient volcanoes. We reach the small town of **Betafo**.

### Betafo - Betafo

- We start our easy hike around **Betafo**, to discover the mosaic of rice fields, transforming themselves in various shades of green and yellow, looking absolutely beautiful.

Overlooked by sumptuous volcanic slopes, this **Valley of the Vakinankaratra** offers splendid landscape, emblematic of the malagasy Highlands, made of a succession of hills, perched villages, red brick houses with thatched roof, and colorful ricefields. We walk from village to village, from house to house meeting with our hosts.

The town of Betafo is also very interesting historically speaking, and we encourage you to take a look at our article below to find out more about this cradle of the **Andratsay Kingdom**.

### Betafo - Antsirabe

- After this nice discovery, we head back towards Antsirabe.

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☕ Breakfast	Ecolodge Les chambres du voyageur   Antsirabe
🍴 Lunch	Picnic during the hike
🏠 Accommodation	Ecolodge Les chambres du voyageur   Antsirabe

## Day 4. Driving in Betsileo country, between wooden crafts and the Betsileo capital, Fianarantsoa



Antsirabe 📍  
🚗 95km - ⌚ 2h  
Ambositra 📍  
🚗 150km - ⌚ 3h 30m  
Fianarantsoa 📍

### Antsirabe - Ambositra

- Then we leave **Antsirabe** to keep going South. We cross the **Highlands** and visit the city of **Ambositra**, famous capital of **wooden crafts**. The craftsmen of Ambositra, close to the **Zafimaniry art**, are the repositories of an original woodworking culture (**sculpture and marquetry**), which used to be very widespread throughout the island.

### Ambositra - Fianarantsoa

- We hit the road again towards **Fianarantsoa**, the historical and cultural capital of the **Betsileo region**. It is the Malagasy city which gathers the highest number of cultural monuments and schools.

Just like Antananarivo, the city is divided in three parts:

- The Upper town, where used to be the **Palace of the Merina Governor**, and where we can admire today protestant churches, a Lutheran school, the brick Tuscan-style Cathedral, the Jesuit school of Ambozotany, and the Antsenakely Square where is held a small market, as its name indicates.
- The New town : the administration neighborhood, where is also held the *zoma* (Friday's market).
- The Lower town **Ampasambazaha**, heart of the city where are located the trading Chinese and Indian neighborhoods.

Fianarantsoa is also well known for its tea plantations and its vineyard.

☕ Breakfast	Ec lodge Les chambres du voyageur   Antsirabe
🏠 Accommodation	Villa Sylvestre Hôtel   Fianarantsoa

## Day 5. Pirogue stroll on the Matsiatra river to the tea plantations of Sahambavy



Fianarantsoa 📍  
 🚗 20km - ⌚ 30m  
 Mahasoabe 📍  
 🚗 20km - ⌚ 30m  
 Fianarantsoa 📍

- Departure to the village of **Mahasoabe**, located about 20 km Est of Fianarantsoa.

Once we get there, we meet with the sailors. Starting our descent on a traditional pirogue, which will last for 2 hours and a half. The river slithers between rice fields and granite mountains. We will stop a few times to meet the locals and **discover their rural lifestyles**. We might also be able to spot various **aquatic bird species**.

Reaching the **village of Iseta**, we will hike across fields and villages, and get back our car to **Sahambavy**.

In the afternoon, we will visit the **unique tea plantation of Madagascar in Sahambavy**, and do a tea tasting. The factory was built in 1978 by the Malagasy State. It was then privatized by an Anonymous Society. About 20 tons of humid leaves are being collected there daily on average, on the 355 ha of plantations, among which 94 ha are held by local farmers.

Back to Fianarantsoa at the end of the day.

Duration : +/- 2h30 of navigation, +/- 1h30 walking, +/- 1h car transfer.

Distance : 40 km

☕ Breakfast	Villa Sylvestre Hôtel   Fianarantsoa
🍴 Lunch	Picnic during the hike
🏠 Accommodation	Villa Sylvestre Hôtel   Fianarantsoa

## Day 6. Meeting with the Lemur Catta and driving on the vast plains of the Horombe Plateau



Fianarantsoa 📍  
 🚗 60km - ⌚ 1h 30m  
 Ambalavao 📍  
 🚗 210km - ⌚ 4h 30m  
 Ranohira 📍

### Fianarantsoa - Ambalavao

- Through the patchwork of terraced rice fields and various cultures where all the shades of green are declined, road to **Ambalavao** known for its vineyards.
- We make a stop at **Anja's reserve** : a forest of ficus, lianas and orchids developed in between a spectacular rock chaos, sometimes forming caves used as shelter by animals.

The rocky slopes have been colonized by succulent plants such as **kalanchoes** and **pachypodiums**.

In this lush green paradise live in small colonies the makis catta, this lemur with a striped tail which represents Madagascar. They spend a lot of time on the ground, are not too wild and so easily observable.

The profit of Anja's reserve are managed by the AMI (Anja Miray) organization, and are donated to finance **social and economical projects**, which purposes are to improve crop yield, crafts development, health and education towards the villagers.

### Ambalavao - Ranohira

- Continuation to the south to **Bara** country and crossing of the largest plateau of Madagascar, the **Horombe desert**, before seeing the village of **Ranohira** that we reach late in the afternoon.

☕ Breakfast	Villa Sylvestre Hôtel   Fianarantsoa
🏠 Accommodation	Isalo Ranch Hôtel   Ranohira

## Day 7. Hiking in the Isalo National Park, among canyons and natural pools



Ranohira 📍  
13km - ⌚ 5h  
Ranohira 📍

- A beautiful day of hiking, discovering the **Isalo National Park**, between **deep canyons**, plateaux, **natural swimming pools**... We should be able to spot many **endemic species of lemurs, birds, reptiles, plants and butterflies**.

**Isalo National Park** was created in 1962, and is classified in the category of Exceptional Parks. Its area is 100 km large from North to South. It is unique in Madagascar thanks to its geological formation, dating from the Jurassic period. This mountain massif made of continental sandstone and dug with deep canyons, welcomes a **rupicolous vegetation (Aloes, Euphorbias, Pachypodium...)**.

You can also find there an **exceptionally rich fauna**, where most species are **natives**, such as **rock reptiles, makis and other lemurs**.

The main **ethnic group** in this region is the **Bara**, living essentially of **farming zebus** and agriculture. Considered as descendent of the Bantu, the Bara are livestock breeders but also **fierce warriors**, proud and ready to give up their life to defend their freedom.

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☕ Breakfast	Isalo Ranch Hôtel   Ranohira
🍴 Lunch	Picnic during the hike
🏠 Accommodation	Isalo Ranch Hôtel   Ranohira

## Day 8. Tulear and Ifaty, the Mozambique Channel



Ranohira 📍  
🚗 250km - ⌚ 4h  
Tulear 📍  
🚗 45km - ⌚ 45m  
Ifaty 📍

- Road towards **Tulear**. We cross the villages of **Ilakaka** and **Sakaraha**, still on top of the **Horombe plateau**, small towns which used to be quiet, until a huge **sapphire reservoir** was discovered there, turning these quiet towns into mining cities worthy of the **American Far West Gold Rush**.

First sight of the baobabs and crossing the **Mahafaly** limestone plateau, with its famous and impressive burials called « **Aloalo** », painted with naive everyday-life scenes.

Visit of Tulear and lunch. Road early in the afternoon to **Ifaty**, about thirty kilometers north of **Tulear**, to join the **Vezo fishermen** countries.

This is where we say farewell to our tour guide, which will return to the capital city the next day.

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☕ Breakfast	Isalo Ranch Hôtel   Ranohira
🏠 Accommodation	Hôtel de la plage   Ifaty

## Day 9. Free stay in Ifaty, on the Capricorn Coast



Ifaty 📍

- **Ifaty, Mangily, Madiorano** and **Ambolimailaka** are small villages that face the majestic lagoon of **Ranobe** with turquoise water, renowned for its coral reef. They are here as seaside resorts.

Free stay, activities to see at the hotel or with your guide: hiking in the backcountry of the dry forest to various varieties of endemic spiny, **euphorbia, Didiéracées, pachypodium** and of **Baobabs**.

The visit can be done in zebu charette or on foot; or relax to enjoy the beach, a beautiful invitation to swim in this beautiful lagoon.

Will also be at the rendez-vous: **excursion featured, balade in traditional dugout canoe, trolling, water skiing, snorkeling**... Or simply walk along the beach, meet the locals and discover in depth the life of these fishing villages.

**Activities and transfers at your own charge, to give you more flexibility according to your envies at that time. Possibility to organize excursions on demand, please consult us.**

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☕ Breakfast	Hôtel de la plage   Ifaty
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## Day 10. Back to Tulear, Flight to Antananarivo (not included) and then towards Europe



Ifaty 📍

🚗 45km - ⌚ 45m

Tulear 📍

✈️ 935km - ⌚ 1h 15m

Antananarivo 📍

✈️ 8500km - ⌚ 10h

Paris Roissy CDG 📍

- Free time before the transfer to Tuléar airport.

At the right time, transfer to Tulear airport (by your hotel there), and domestic flight to Antananarivo (at your own charge).

A member of the Détours Madagascar team welcomes you upon arrival at Ivato Antananarivo Airport.

- According to the flights schedule, stroll around Antananarivo with your driver guide to buy the last souvenirs.

At the end of the day, a room in Day Use will be available for you to take a rest before your international flight back home.

In the evening, transfer to the airport and assistance to boarding on your international flight home with Air France. Night flight.

🍽️ Breakfast

Hôtel de la plage | Ifaty

🏠 Accommodation

Green Palace guest house | Ivato

## Day 11. Arrival in Europe

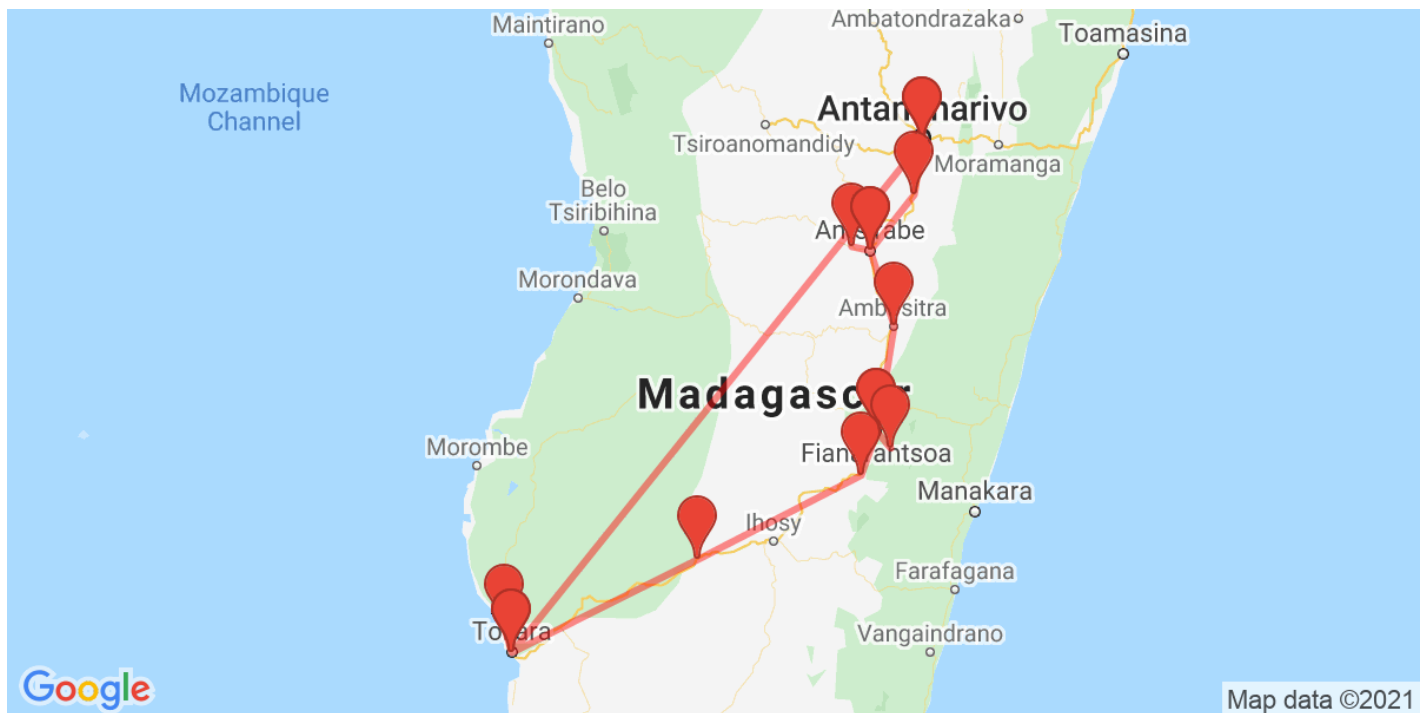


Paris Roissy CDG 📍

- Arrival late in the morning in Europe. *Misaotra* and see you soon !



# Itinerary map



## Individual price per person

2-2	3-3	4-8	SS
1090 EUR	950 EUR	820 EUR	220 EUR

Price without domestic flight Tuléar > Antananarivo.

You also have the option to **privatize this trip** at the dates of your choice, for you and your travel companions only. For a privatized tour, the price depends on the number of travelers. Of course, in case of a privatized trip, this program can be used also as a first basis draft to give you some inspiration, and according to your wishes we will propose a **completely customized, tailor-made tour** for you.

## Included

- Transportation by 4x4 vehicle or mini-bus (according to the group's size), with gas included, during the all tour from D1 to D8, except in Ifaty, and on D10 in Antananarivo,
- The services of an English-speaking driver-guide from D1 to D8, except in Ifaty, and on D10 in Antananarivo,
- Accommodation in a double/twin room in mentioned hotels (or equivalent, according to availability upon booking),
- All breakfasts, from breakfast on D2 to breakfast on D10,
- Picnic lunches on D3, D5 and D7,
- Activities, visits and entrance fees into the indicated sites, except during the free stay in Ifaty,
- Local guides in parks and reserves,
- All mentioned transfers.

## Not included

- International flights,
- The domestic flight Tuléar > Antananarivo,
- All meals on international flights days,
- Lunches and dinners, except picnic lunches on D3, D5 and D7 which are included,
- Non-mentioned activities and during the free stay in Ifaty,
- The guide and vehicle Détours Madagascar during the free stay in Ifaty,
- The single room supplement,
- Drinks (mineral water, sodas, beers...) during and outside meals,
- Tips and personal expenses,
- First Aid costs, Cancellation and Repatriation Insurance,
- Visa fees.