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## Canoeing down the Tsiribihina River

### *The adventure in a Malagasy dugout*

Small adventure groups, every Wednesday and Thursday, starting from Antananarivo, from 4 April to 8 November 2012. Price is 600 Euro sharing



We get to know the area by a traditional wooden boat tour. Big parts of the west of Madagascar are mountainous. Only few people live there. In fact, most of the region is uninhabited due to bad state of roads. We see a wonderful waterfall, where you refresh yourselves. Landscape beside the river is great. We passing by some dense vegetation along the riverbanks, towering cliffs and baobab forests. The west is also well known for the fabulous Avenue of the Baobabs near Morondava and its nice beaches. We have the chance of getting a close approach to daily life in the western part of Madagascar.

#### **Dates and Duration:**

Departure daily possible from March to November  
 Small groups every Wednesday and Thursday from 4 April to 8 November 2012 starting in Antananarivo  
 7 days / 6 nights

#### **Towns:**

Antananarivo  
 Antsirabe  
 Miandrivazo  
 Morondava

#### **Highlights:**

*Canoeing down the Tsiribihina River in a traditional wooden boat*  
*Anosin' Ampela waterfall*  
*Daily life in the western region of Madagascar*  
*The sacred baobab tree*  
*Baobab in love*  
*Avenue of the Baobabs*  
*Walks and Exploration of the baobab forest*

### **Day 1,**

#### **Antananarivo – Antsirabe**

Pick-up at Antananarivo airport or your hotel. Drive to Antsirabe. The drive takes us across the highland landscape with its beautiful rice fields and its spectacular eroded hills called 'lavaka' and through a lush green landscape where vegetables and fruits are farmed. We will take a tour of the city, wandering through wide, palm-lined boulevards. Also we visit some artisan production. Night in a colonial style hotel where, in earlier years, farmers from the East coast relaxed.

*Included meals: lunch, dinner*

### **Day 2,**

#### **Antsirabe – Miandrivazo**

Antsirabe, from where we start, is a lovely town and a stroll around its streets will bring you in contact with some fantastic little shops selling Malagasy artefacts and handicrafts. It is a very peculiar town because of its charming characteristics. Industrial town – agricultural town – tourist town. After a short visit of the town we drive to Miandrivazo, about 220 km. We pass a moonlike landscape. Here is the starting point of the pirogue tour.

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

### **Day 3,**

#### **Start of the River tour**

We begin our calm water river journey on the majestic Tsiribihina River. We travel approximately 160 km on the river, using traditional boats made out of one trunk of wood. Those trees are endemic to Madagascar or the region. Nowadays pirogue builders are rare as more and more motorboats are coming up. The trip is slow and you can relax and enjoy calls of birds such as bee-eater, coucal, pied crow... We will occasionally work together to lift the boat over high sand banks. Our trip will take us about 160km along the river, finally arriving in Tsaraotana, a small village 100 km north of Morondava. Meals are served on the shore; camp-sites on the Tsiribihina River are usually large sandbars with smooth and clean tent sites.

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

### **Day 4,**

#### **Canoeing down the Tsiribihina River**

On the river we pass several ranges of wooded hills on our way. Today we continue passing the Gorge of Bemaraha with its steep rocks before we stop at Anosin' Ampela, a wonderful waterfall where we can refresh ourselves. Also cloth washing is fast done. We will see dense vegetation along the riverbanks, towering cliffs and baobab forests. Water birds, fruit bats and lemurs will accompany our journey.

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

### **Day 5,**

#### **Canoeing down the Tsiribihina River – Anosin' Ampela waterfall**

This morning we rise early for our relaxing boat trip downstream along the Tsiribihina River. Passing through diverse landscapes, isolated natural wilderness beside the Tsiribihina River, reminding us how far away we are from home. We continue to pass by some villages where on the way long the river kids wave their hands with their smiles saying: hello.

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

**Day 6,****Arrival in Tsaraotana – Avenue of the Baobab – Morondava**

A last two hours before we say 'Good bye' to the Tsiribihina. Also this last part of the pirogue trip leads us to beautiful landscapes with rice fields on banks. We arrive in the morning in Tsaraotana where we unload the pirogues and we embark into 4WD. We travel south to Morondava. We enjoy a picnic lunch in the forest. We stop at the sacred Baobab, the Baobab in love and we try to catch sunset at the 'Avenue of the Baobab' between Belo sur Tsiribihina and Morondava. More than a dozen majestic old giant baobabs (*Adansonia grandidieri*) growing next to the track. The day's last golden rays strike the bloated trunks from the west.

*Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner*

**Day 7,****Morondava**

After the strain of the last days we can relax on the beach of Morondava. – End of service. –

*Included meals: breakfast*

**Prices:**

Participating in one of our groups you typically will be sharing your experiences with between six to 12 like minded travellers and you'll have a tour manager with you. Whether you are travelling alone or with friends it's good value, and a great way to meet new people. While itinerary is scheduled there is some flexibility and you'll have plenty of privacy.

If you prefer a private tour please let us know.

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**Below prices in Euro per person on individual adventure groups**

<b>2 persons</b>	<b>3 persons</b>	<b>4 persons</b>	<b>5 persons</b>	<b>6 persons</b>	<b>7 or 8 persons</b>	<b>9 or 10 persons</b>	<b>11 or 12 persons</b>	<b>Single room surcharge</b>
995	975	820	800	745	675	650	600	100

***Included services:***

*English speaking tour manager*

*Overnight in the hotels in double room, mostly with private facilities, during the river tour in tent,*

*Meals as mentioned, including 1 ½ l of mineral water per person per day,*

*Going by traditional pirogue, car or 4WD, all transfers,*

*All entrance fees*

*Tip for drivers, local guides, porters, waiters etc.*

***Not included:***

*International and domestic flights*

*Drinks except mentioned*

*Private expenses*

Depending on your arrival and departure hours we suggest another night in Antananarivo, We will be happy to propose a hotel.

The tour ends in Morondava, you may book another module that starts here or travel to Antananarivo, Antsirabe or Toliara.

This is a complex itinerary and may be subject to change.

*Requirements: you should like camping, teamgeist.*

Please note: This tour is on private basis customisable.

**Complementary information:**

Duration of tour: 7 days

Car: 2 days

4WD: 1 day

Pirogue tour: 3 days and two hours

**How this tour makes a difference:**

The pirogue or 'lakana' as it is called in Madagascar is a dugout canoe. They are made of native hardwood like Soarafa or Arofy. The length is nine to eleven meters long and 50 to 60 cm large. Mostly are two persons in a pirogue. Of course there is a boatman who rows and navigates. For convenience, there is a mat and a pillow available.

Camp sites on the river, we camp mostly on sand banks. The beach is wide, the sand is soft and clean tent. Spacious dome tents (with awning), a 3-cm self-inflating mattress, sleeping bag, blanket and pillows available.

Vital food – with appetite and pleasure of eating, we may experience new taste sensations. Wherever possible we use local products we buy in the markets and small shops. It is not necessarily meat or chicken every day, at least once dish we prepare without it. We put an emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables, but cheese, charcuterie and pancakes is not missing. However, options for fresh fish, vegetables and meat are limited on the river. Therefore, here and there we open a tin can. To round off a small range of drinks is available. Your requests and suggestions are welcome.

The people in Madagascar are friendly and patient. We go far out to a rural region and we try to bridge the gap between the different cultures. We can learn about each other's cultures and countries. We will give you a sense of Malagasy culture.

We limit the group size on this tour to 12 to assist in reducing both the potential negative cultural and environmental impact of our tour. We enjoy our interaction with different cultural groups in a spirit of respect and understanding.

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## Previewed hotels and Camp-sites

(Information provided here are mostly from third party)

Destination	Accommodation	Facilities
Antsirabe	LaVilla	LaVilla is a new hotel-restaurant in the Vakinankaratra region of Antsirabe, located on the National road 7, the axis to the south. The hotel offers its guests a panoramic view and swimming pool on the disposition of the travellers. In the restaurant various menus meet your expectations. The comfortable rooms, equipped with TV guarantee a pleasant stay ensures relaxation.
Miandrivazo	Gîte de la Tsiribihina	Basic but clean hotel in centre town, view on the Tsiribihina River. 9 rooms with sink, other facilities are common, fan. Restaurant, bar.
Tsiribihina River Canoe (Piroque) Expedition	Camping	Spacious tents for two persons, 3-cm self inflating mattress, sleeping bag, blanket, pillow. Tents are spacious, children can stay in the tents of the parents if they want.
Morondava	Chez Maggie	A Romantic Hide-Away in a Secluded Garden Setting. From the moment you set foot on the grounds you'll know why the Chez Maggie has long enjoyed the reputation as the hotel of choice in Morondava. As one of the first properties on Nosy Kely; the large rooms, established gardens, and west-facing beach front setting provide a tranquil and luxurious retreat.

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