

Itinerary of the tour

The culture of the Menabe region – the life in the western region of Madagascar

From Antananarivo to Morondava, 9 days / 8 nights, from May to October

Small adventure groups 2012 are from 1190 Euro sharing:
 every Wednesday and Thursday from 16 May to 11 October 2012 starting in Antananarivo



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. We visit the mineral forest Tsingy de Bemaraha with its limestone needles. 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:

From / to Antananarivo
 9 days / 8 nights,

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Towns:

Antananarivo
 Antsirabe
 Miandrivazo
 Belo sur Tsiribihina
 Morondava

Highlights:

Canoeing down the Tsiribihina River in a traditional wooden boat
Anosin' Ampela waterfall
Daily life in the western region of Madagascar
Tsingy de Bemaraha NP
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 on the Tsiribihina River

We begin our calm water river journey on the majestic Tsiribihina River. We travel approximately 160 km's 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 130km 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 – Anosin' Ampela waterfall

On the river we pass several ranges of wooded hills on our way. Today we continue passing the 'Gorge de 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

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 – Tsingy de Bemaraha**

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 embark into 4WD. We continuing in direction of Tsingy de Bemaraha, which is classified as one of the world wonders by UNESCO. The fascinating raised limestone plateau is decorated with sharp pinnacles. Areas of deciduous forest also provide the chance to see brown lemurs as well as Sifaka lemurs and a variety of birds. Bemaraha contains an original flora. The dry dense forest has several types of vegetable formations. We arrive in the afternoon and check-in our hotel.

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 7,**Tsingy de Bemaraha excursion**

Bemaraha is a plate of moderate altitude, with the shredded relief, consists of a limestone deposit massive Covered by the dense and dry forest, the erosion of water carved there a tight network of deep cracks separated by grooved blades and acute points. Today we have a full day trek with a local guide in the park. There are some different ways to the valleys. The limestone needles are up to 60 m where we can probably find once more Sifaka lemurs (*Propithecus verreauxi*).

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 8,**Tsingy de Bemaraha – Morondava**

After we crossing the Manambolo River by ferry we travel south by 4x4 vehicles to the Belo sur Tsiribihina. We enjoy a lunch there. 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 9,**Morondava**

After the strain of the last days, you may relax. – End of service. –

Included meals: breakfast

This module ends in Morondava on the west coast of Madagascar. From here we may continue to visit another part of the country or to stay some days on the beach before travelling back to Antananarivo.

We propose to arrive latest one day earlier in Madagascar and to spend a night here. We will be happy to suggest a hotel for you.

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 and we will be happy to send a personalised offer.

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Below prices in Euro per person

Tsingy de Bemaraha	2 persons	3 persons	4 persons	5 persons	6 persons	7 or 8 persons	9 or 10 persons	11 or 12 persons
camping	1950	1780	1370	1340	1300	1280	1200	1190
hotel	1990	1820	1410	1380	1340	1320	1240	1240

The two nights in Tsingy de Bemaraha (Day 7 – 9) you may choose between tent and a hotel room depending on your preferences.

Single room surcharge 150 / 190 Euro, depending if in the Tsingy de Bemaraha you prefer a hotel room or a tent.

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

Local guide at the visited park, tip for drivers, local guides, porters, waiters etc.

Not included:

International and domestic flights

Drinks except mentioned

Private expenses

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

Requirements: you should like camping, teamgeist.

Please note: for this tour is one inbound flight required that is not included in the tour price.

This tour is customisable on private tours.

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Complementary information:

Duration of tour: 9 days
 Car or minibus: 2 days
 4WD: 2 days and transfers
 Pirogue tour: 3 days and two hours
 Trekking: 1 day

The pirogue or 'lakana' as it is called in Madagascar is a dugout canoe. They are made of native hardwood like Soarafo 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.

Hotel, Lodges and camp sites

(information below is mostly given by 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 nice 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 (Pirogue) Expedition	Different Camp sites	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.
Bekopaka	Orchidée de Bemaraha	Situated on a hill there more than one dozen comfortable Bungalows with a private veranda. View on the unspoilt landscape. There is a pool, restaurant with bar. Here you taste the French and Malagasy specialities with their exotic spices meanwhile you appreciate the unique natural landscape.
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.