

African Sojourns

Specialists in Personalised Travel

MADAGASCAR COUNTRY INFORMATION



In preparation for your Madagascar Sojourn please find below some interesting facts about Madagascar.. For further information you can visit the official Madagascar Tourism Authority's website: www.madagascar-tourisme.com/en



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Madagascar, officially the Republic of Madagascar and previously known as the Malagasy Republic, is an island country in the Indian Ocean, off the coast of Southeast Africa. It is the world's 47th largest country and the fourth-largest island. More than 80 % of Madagascar's 14,883 plant species are found nowhere else in the world, including five plant families.

Visas:

*Visas can be obtained in advance from the relevant Madagascar Embassy in your country of origin - costs vary from country to country. **They are also easily available on arrival. A passport valid for at least 6 months from return date with 2 free pages is also essential. South African passport holders do require a visa which is issued on arrival at a cost of EUR35.***

Money:

*Although the official unit of currency in Madagascar is the Ariary, many of the populace still cling to their old unit the FMG (Franc Malagasy). This can be a little confusing as prices are often given in FMG, while notes are denominated in Ariary! 5 FMG is equal to 1 Ariary and the exchange rate is approximately US\$1 = 3500Ariary (MGA) or 10,000FMG. **Euros are the recommended currencies for changing into Ariary. EUR50 notes are the most accepted. Please note that Mastercard, Maestro and American Express are very hard to use, so we recommend that you bring a VISA credit/debit card or budget to cover your entire trip with cash and travellers cheques.** The easiest way to get local currency is to draw cash from the ATM. There are 2 ATM's in Hell-Ville. Please ask the driver who collects you from the airport that you need to draw money. Remember to let your bank know that you will be traveling abroad. **There are no ATM's at the airport or in any of the local areas so make sure to draw enough.** When clients leave Nosy Be we leave from Hell-Ville so there is a chance to draw more local cash if need be.*

*There is a bureau de change at the airport. **NB** first check the official exchange rate at bureau de change before dealing with street money changers that your driver may suggest you use. Sometimes the street changer will give you a better rate but normally they won't because you have no idea of the exchange rate.*

Health:

Madagascar is a Malarial Area, so malarial prevention medications and also a good insect repellent are strongly recommended. Please do consult your physician or specialist travel clinic before departure. Yellow Fever certificates are required by those arriving from a yellow fever endemic country (such as Kenya or Tanzania). Please note that medical facilities in the country are basic and so you should advise us of any pre-existing medical conditions. We insist that all clients travelling have full medical insurance, including emergency evacuation cover.

Language:

As a former French colony the French language is widely spoken in the larger towns and cities throughout Madagascar. However, English was added as an official language in 2007 and is slowly becoming more widely spoken. In rural areas it is common for only Malagasy to be spoken but our ground staff will always be there to help you translate and explain situations and events in fluent English.

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Security:

As with any developing country petty crime does exist, particularly in the large urban areas, this is generally limited to snatch theft and is opportunistic. We recommend that clients leave valuables in their hotel safe and do not wear easy to remove jewellery in markets or busy places. Incidents of violent crime against tourists are rare and in general Madagascar is a country in which visitors rightly feel very safe. Although Madagascar is generally safe, you should heed caution in the capital Antananarivo as there are many pickpockets.

Daily life in Madagascar (GMT +3):

Madagascar is predominantly a rural country with most of the population involved in farming and livestock. The pace of life is slow and relaxed, the people are friendly and it is a great country to both visit and live in. As in many developing countries things don't always go exactly according to plan, that's part of the charm. The best maintained vehicles still get flat tyres, unexpected rain can flood roads and flights can be delayed. If you relax and enjoy the goings on around you, including any unforeseen problems, you will have a fantastic holiday and see some of the most interesting and beautiful wildlife and culture on the planet.

Climate:

The combination of south-eastern trade winds and north-western monsoons produces a hot rainy season (November–April) with frequently destructive cyclones, and a relatively cooler dry season (May–October). Rain clouds originating over the Indian Ocean discharge much of their moisture over the island's eastern coast; the heavy precipitation supports the area's rain forest ecosystem. The central highlands are both drier and cooler while the west is drier still, and a semi-arid climate prevails in the southwest and southern interior of the island.

Donations to schools:

We encourage guests not to give sweets or money to local children, but if you feel you wish to help local school children we can assist you with this. If you intend to donate any materials for a local school in Madagascar, we recommend: note books, pens, pencils, colouring/drawing equipment etc...

Some phrases and words you may wish to learn:

English	Malagasy
English	Anglisy
Yes	Eny

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No	<i>Tsia</i>
Hello! and How are You?	<i>Manao ahoana!</i>
Hello! (rural areas)	<i>Salama!</i>
I'm fine, thank you.	<i>Tsara fa misaotra.</i>
Goodbye!	<i>Veloma!</i>
Please	<i>Azafady</i>
Thank you	<i>Misaotra</i>
You're welcome	<i>Tsy misy fisaorana.</i>
Excuse me	<i>Azafady with arm and hand pointing to the ground</i>
What's your name?	<i>Iza no anaranao?</i>
I don't understand.	<i>Tsy azoko.</i>
Help!	<i>Vonjeo!</i>
Can you help me please?	<i>Afaka manampy ahy ve ianao?</i>
Where are the bathrooms?	<i>Aiza no ivoahana?</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>Mahay teny anglisy ve ianao?</i>

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I do not speak Malagasy.	<i>Tsy mahay teny Gasy aho.</i>
That's expensive!	<i>Lafo be izany!</i>
one	<i>iray</i>
two	<i>roa</i>
three	<i>telo</i>

African Sojourns wishes you a wonderful experience in Madagascar!

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