



Remote River Expeditions



Madagascar – The Island of Contrasts

“West Meets East”

With Manambolo River & Tsingy de Bemaraha / 21 Days

Day 1 Arrive **Antananarivo**. You will be met upon arrival to Ivato Airport and transfer together to the Mahavelo Hotel (or similar) for overnight. Dinner on own.

Day 2 Early morning drive to **Andasibe (Perinet) National Park**, crossing the famous cliff of La Mandraka with a panoramic view of the Anjiro plain. Optional visit to **Peireyras Farm** (cameleons, butterflies, crocodiles, snakes) at Marozevo.

This is the domain of the Indri Indri, the tallest living lemur, smaller Fulvus, and Rubriventer lemurs can also be seen. We enjoy an afternoon walking safari in the primary forest of the large Mantadia National Park. After dinner we take a night walk for nocturnal lemurs and birds (nightjars & owls). Accommodation at the Hotel Feon'ny Ala. (B,L,D)

Day 3 Morning walking in **Matadia National Park**. Afternoon return to Antananarivo for overnight. Mahavelo Hotel (or similar). (B,L,D)

Day 4 After breakfast we travel overland through the typical landscape from Antananarivo to the Ampefy lakes situated in the mid-west of Madagascar. After lunch we continue west to **Tsiroanomandidy**. The landscape is dominated by eroded hills that serve as pasture land to the numerous cattle of the west. This typical Malagasy landscape also offers a variety of endemic water birds along our way. We overnight in Tsiroanomandidy at a basic local hotel. (B,L,D)

Day 5 After breakfast we transfer to the airstrip and take a short (25 mins) flight over the Bongolava mountain range from **Tsiroanomandidy to Akavandra**. On arrival we meet our team of river guides and following lunch begin our journey on the tranquil **Manambolo River**. This is an isolated area of Madagascar that is only accessible by canoe or by foot. Camping. (B,L,D)

Day 6 – 7 **Canoeing on the Manambolo River**. On the river we'll use 14ft canoes, paddling each day from camp to camp. No previous experience is needed as there are no rapids and the river remains calm throughout the journey. Local Malagasy river guides will be along as assist as needed. Camping. (B,L,D)

Day 8 **Gorge Camp**. The landscape changes abruptly as we go deeper into unspoiled parts of Madagascar passing into the spectacular “Gorges of Manambolo River”. Spending of the day in a canyon where a small river with clear blue-green water meets the brown water of the Manambolo, creating a striking contrast. This is really a fascinating place and we enjoy bathing and exploration the tropical deciduous forest harboring a great variety of wildlife. The vertical rock cliffs on both sides of the river create an astonishing silent and wonderful evening campsite. Camping. (B,L,D)

Day 9 After breakfast we continue downstream through the imposing gorge, between limestone walls and overhangs on which we can see peculiar vegetation, much birdlife, and the shrill cries of black parrots resound against the cliffs. This is our last day of canoeing. At midday, we come out to **Andadonay (near Bekopaka)** and an opportunity to enjoy a cold drink.

In the afternoon visit to the '**Petite**' **Tsingy de Bemaraha**. This is Madagascar's largest reserve, classified as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, certain fascinating raised limestone plateaus decorated with chaotic razor sharp pinnacles with the underground cave systems and many succulents growing in the crevices. Croco Camp. (B)

Day 10 After the breakfast, we enjoy a full day visit to the '**Grand**' **Tsingy** before returning to Bekopaka and our overnight camp. (B)

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Day 11 Following an early breakfast we travel overland from **Bekopaka**, enjoy lunch in Belo Tsiribihina and cross the Tsiribihina River by local ferry boat. We continue south through the deciduous forestland to the **Kirindy Forest** also known as the ‘Swiss Forest’. After dinner we take an evening walk in the forest. Overnight in rustic bungalows in the forest. (B,L,D)

Day 12 Early morning and afternoon walks in the **Kirindy Forest**.

This is the most rewarding natural area for seeing Madagascar’s endemic western dry forest species. The 25,000-acre Kirindy Forest has the greatest density and diversity of primates in the world. Probably the best western Reserve for seeing Madagascar’s endemic dry forest species, the Kirindy is home to the giant jumping rat, found only in this area. Dominated by majestic baobab trees, the forest is home to the world’s smallest known primate as well as dozens of amphibian and reptile species (and no poisonous snakes). As well the forest boasts more than 60 species of birds and 8 lemur species.

In the late afternoon we continue south with stops at the Baobabs in Love and a sunset visit at the world famous **Ave of the Baobabs** before reaching the coastal town **Morondava**.

Our home base in this relaxing coastal town is the Chez Maggie Hotel, a romantic hide-away in a comfortable garden setting. The hotel features: air-conditioned 2-story chalets and bungalows; superb cuisine; swimming pool and a full service bar. Overnight at the Chez Maggie Hotel. www.chezmaggie.com (B)

Day 13 Largely an undiscovered gem we enjoy a relaxing day in the tranquil coastal town of **Morondava**. Our home base is the Chez Maggie Hotel, a romantic hide-away in a comfortable garden setting. The hotel features: air-conditioned 2-story chalets and bungalows; superb cuisine; swimming pool and a full service bar. Optional activities are available: paddling in the mangrove swamps or dowha sailing on the Mozambique Channel.

The choice is yours: stroll along the beach, swim in the warm water of the Mozambique Channel, lounge by the pool, or take a walk through town for local flavor and shopping. After enjoying the setting sun over the channel we sample the excellent cuisine of Le Masoandro Restaurant. Chez Maggie Hotel. (B)

Day 14 Following breakfast we transfer to the airport for our mid-morning flights; crossing the island from **Morondava** to the town of **Maroantsetra**, gateway to the Masoala National Park. This Park is located along Madagascar’s savage northeast coast and is the newest national park in the country. The rough coast line once supplied sanctuary for pirates of the Indian Ocean - today it protects the natural wonders of Malagasy rainforest, breathtaking coral reefs and innumerable abandoned bays, beaches and small islands. Hotel Coco Beach

Day 15 – 19 Masoala National Park. Lodge based sea kayaking, snorkeling and forest walks. Kayak to Nosy Behento, a classic deserted tropical island situated at the southern tip of the Masoala Peninsula. We kayak, with a support boat, to various spots around the peninsula, including deserted islands, up the Fampotobe River and into the heart of the Masoala Peninsula. [Masoala Forest Lodge](#)

Here we pass stunning coastlines of sandy coves separated by rocky, forested headlands. We will also take time to snorkel the amazing waters and discover the littoral rainforest on nature walks. One of the areas we visit is Antalavia, about 50 km from Maroantsetra, is in a protected bay at the end of 10 km long beach. A cool fresh water stream flows through the beach into the sea and great cascades leads steeply into the heart of the high land rain forest.

Day 20 Return by boat to **Maroantsetra** for overnight at the Hotel Coco Beach.

Day 21 Masoala- Antananarivo. Relaxing morning and afternoon flights to Antananarivo. Transfer downtown to for sunset farewell dinner and celebration at the Grill du Rova overlooking the capital. Connect to outbound flights.

End of services.

- **Exact program will vary according to international flight arrival and departure times.**

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Note on the Itinerary

Includes: Expert leadership and naturalist guides; domestic flight Morondava to Tana; airport transfers and all ground transportation; all hotels and meals outside Tana (except as noted above); Tana city tour; Perinet, Kirindy, and Masoala entrance fees; local guides; river trip; camp and cook staff; camping and commissary equipment (except sleeping bag) and room occupancy taxes.

Excludes: International flights; visas, airport taxes; lunches and dinners Days 1, 3, 4, 9 & 10; entrance fees and guide services in the Tsingy de Bemaraha; insurance of any kind; tips; excess baggage; cost of immunizations; drinks (water, sodas, alcoholic drinks); and items of a personal nature laundry, etc).

The itinerary is subject to change with schedule and availability of domestic flights. Accommodations are subject to change due to availability. Although we will do our very best to adhere to the itinerary schedule as listed, it is subject to change for numerous reasons beyond our control. If the trip is delayed because of bad weather, cancelled or delayed flights or delays on other modern transportation, sickness, or other situations for which Remote River Expeditions or its agents cannot make provisions, the cost of delays is not included.

Tour Notes

Mantadia (Perinet) National Park: East of Antananarivo Mantadia National Park, crossing the famous cliff of La Mandraka with a panoramic view of the Anjoro plain. On the way we'll visit the Peireyras Farm for an introduction to some of the unique wildlife of the island including butterflies, crocodiles, lemurs and reptiles. Day walking safari within the fauna reserve of the Analanmazaotra rainforest. This is the domain of the Indri-Indri, the tallest living lemur. Walking safari in the primary forest of the park we enjoy other lemurs numerous endemic birds, orchids, fern trees, pandanus and many palms. Smaller Fulvus, Bamboo and Rubriventer lemurs may also be seen. Night walking safari for nocturnal lemurs (bush baby) and birds (nightjars and owls).

- 1) <http://taniko.free.fr/parks/andasibe.htm>
- 2) <http://homepage2.nifty.com/wwgkanda/MAD/birdperi.html>
- 3) <http://homepage2.nifty.com/wwgkanda/MAD/mamlperi.html>

TSINGY DE BEMARAHA: This is Madagascar's largest reserve (152 000 hectares.), classified as one of the world wonders by UNESCO. The fascinating raised limestone plateau is decorated with a frail, chaotic razor-sharp collection of pinnacles, the "Tsingy". Areas of deciduous forest also provide the chance to see brown lemurs and a variety of birdlife, we may also meet the rare all white Decken's sifaka.

http://www.wcmc.org.uk/protected_areas/data/wh/bemaraha.html

KIRINDY FOREST

The Kirindy boasts more than 60 species of birds. Possible sighting include: White-headed Vanga, Rufous Vanga, White-breasted Mesite, Coquerel's Coua, Crested Coua, Sickle-billed Vanga, Chabert's Vanga, Cuckoo Roller, Grey-headed Lovebird, Madagascar Nightjar, Henst Goshawk and Banded Kestrel. Along with a stunning variety of unique flora the forest is home to 8 lemur species.

<http://taniko.free.fr/parks/kirindy.htm>

CHEZ MAGGIE HOTEL / MORONDAVA

For more information on Morondava and the Menabe Region please visit: www.chezmaggie.com

Masoala National Park

This area offers a great rain forest experience with many lemur species and endemic birds along with geckos, chameleons and other forest inhabitants. Another great stop over after a day of paddling is Nosy Behento. This small remote tropical island is located at the southernmost tip of the Masoala Peninsula at the end of the long barrier reef. The lagoon within the reef is part of a nature reservation and its protected waters are ideally snorkeling and exploring. The island is covered of dense forest, a combination of Ravinala palms, coconut palms and different kinds of hardwoods. On the highest point of the island provides a wonderful lookout point over the lagoon and the peninsula.

www.masoalasafd.com

